

**PERCEPTIONS OF EAP PRACTITIONERS REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENTAL
SOCIAL WELFARE APPROACH IN THE GAUTENG PROVINCE**

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Dedication

This paper is dedicated to the EAP industry in South Africa, EAPA-SA, Professor Lourie Terblanche and my colleagues practicing as EAP practitioners, service providers, corporate clients and industry disruptors who are constantly focused on refining the field with such dedication and commitment.

To my family: David, Alyssa and Hunter Stark I dedicate thanks to you for your patience and understanding during this journey. To my parents: Malcolm and Heather Hassen; my brother and sister: Wesley and Ensley Hassen and my nieces, Talia, Layla and Leah – thank you for your support and motivation in this time.

Most importantly, all thanks and praise be to my saviour, God Almighty, who has given me the strength, ability and capacity to complete this paper despite all challenges.

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To the EAPA-SA board and all study participants, I wish to extend a special word of thanks. Colleagues, without your support and involvement, contributions such as this paper would not be possible. Thank you for taking the time to enter into this journey with me and the University of Pretoria. It is only through such support that we are able to grow the body of knowledge and insight into our field for future development. Your time, vulnerability and patience is greatly appreciated.

To all my friends and colleagues – thank you for your undying support, especially my two key sources of inspiration: Youlanda van Booma and Nevania Naidoo.

Declaration

I, Bronwyn Vivian Hassen, student at the University of Pretoria, Social Work and Criminology department holding student number 15260552 declare that this work, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works has all been referenced and acknowledged. This is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for other degrees elsewhere.

Abstract

Perceptions of EAP practitioners regarding the developmental social welfare approach in Gauteng Province.

The developmental social welfare approach forms part of South Africa's approach to social development issues impacting the country as a whole, and sets out to address and effectively rectify past loopholes, gaps and service delivery issues. The approach, which has been adopted by government and seen as the underpinning premise for the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997) has been in place for well over 20 years. Despite this, South Africa's unique history and diverse genetic makeup has presented leadership, practitioners and organisations aiming to implement the approach with several challenges. Many of these challenges have been addressed in various forms over the years, however a few key components such as delivery mechanisms, effective partnerships and overall ability to deliver world-class services in this sphere remain a work in progress.

More recently, the upswing in EAP service offerings being taken up by corporate South Africa has demonstrated a dire need for social services in the workplace. Not only has this need arisen from the need by corporates to engage and retain the workforce, but also to bridge the gaps that exist between the country's citizens and access to government services which have been and remain under strain due to our socio-economic status as a whole.

With the above in mind, this study set out to understand and explore how EAP practitioners view the developmental social welfare approach and to ascertain if there are any potential opportunities and gaps for smarter partnerships to enhance the possibility of reaching the country's goals, as set out in the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997).

This study, which is qualitative and -exploratory in nature, employed a case study design. Furthermore, the researcher utilised semi-structured interviews as the data collection method in an attempt to gain as much insight and detail from the sample population as possible. The study aims to understand the perceptions of EAP practitioners with reference to the developmental social welfare approach.

From a research methodology perspective, the researcher employed purposive stratified sampling. The research focused on a specific sample which had been drawn from registered EAPA-SA practitioners and professionals based in Gauteng Province, irrespective of their academic backgrounds and occupation.

Findings from the study indicated, from the onset, an unclear understanding of developmental social welfare as a key principal and approach; however, upon unpacking each theme and objective, the participants were able to engage and participate freely. This observation is key to the study as it is indicative of the work that needs to be done if South Africa is to reach its 2030 National Development Plan goals, as well as a strong indicator of the need for social welfare services to collaborate. The overarching finding which addresses the main purpose of the study suggests that many workable similarities already exist and goes on to further identify views of where EAP practitioners in Gauteng Province believe gaps or further opportunities exist.

List of key concepts

- EAP
- EAP Practitioner
- Occupational Social Work
- Developmental Social Welfare Approach
- Gauteng Province

Table of Contents

PERCEPTIONS OF EAP PRACTITIONERS REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENTAL SOCIAL WELFARE APPROACH IN THE GAUTENG PROVINCE.....	1
Dedication	2
Declaration	4
Abstract	5
List of key concepts.....	7
List of Figures.....	12
List of Tables.....	13
Chapter 1	14
1. General Background of the Study	14
1.1 Executive summary	14
1.2 Introduction.....	14
1.3 Definition of concepts	22
1.4 Theoretical framework.....	24
1.5 Rationale of the study.....	25
1.6 Goal and objectives of the study	26
1.7 Research approach	27
1.8 Type of research	28
1.9 Research design	29
1.10 Data collection	30
1.11 Data analysis	31
1.12 Pilot study	35
1.13 Description of population, sample and method	36
1.14 Ethical aspects.....	37

1.15	Limitations of the study	40
Chapter 2		42
Literature Review on the Developmental Social Welfare Approach and Employee Assistance Programmes		42
2.1	Introduction.....	42
2.2	Conceptualisation of relevant concepts.....	42
2.3	Developmental Social Welfare in South Africa: The White Paper for Social Welfare	45
2.4	Implementation of the DSW in South Africa	48
2.5	Challenges faced by social service practitioners in implementing the DSW approach within the South African context.....	52
2.6	Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) in South Africa	54
2.7	History of EAPs in South Africa	54
2.8	EAP practice model.....	56
2.8.1	Overview of EAPs.....	56
2.8.2	The variability of EAP services	57
2.8.3	Linking principles between the DSW approach and EAPs.....	57
2.8.4	Management of citizens in the workplace	58
2.8.5	EAPs and the macro environment	59
2.9	Summary	60
2.10	The scope and limitations of EAPs in South Africa regarding the DSW approach.....	61
2.11	Conclusion	62
Chapter 3		64
Empirical Investigation into the Perceptions of EAP Practitioners Regarding the Developmental Welfare Approach in Gauteng Province		64
3.1	Introduction.....	64
3.2	Research methodology.....	65

3.2.1	Goal.....	65
3.2.2	Research approach	65
3.2.3	Population, sample and sampling method	66
3.2.4	Data collection.....	68
3.2.5	Data analysis.....	68
3.3	Empirical findings	69
3.3.1	Section 1: Biographical depiction of population	69
3.3.2	Qualitative information according to themes and sub-themes	73
3.4	Conclusion.....	100
Chapter 4	102
Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations	102
4.1	Introduction.....	102
4.2	Structural guide of study.....	104
4.3	Research findings and conclusions	105
4.4	Recommendations	109
4.4.1	Department of Social Welfare and Social Welfare practitioner recommendations.....	109
4.4.2	Employee Assistance recommendations	109
4.4.3	General recommendations.....	110
4.5	Concluding remarks.....	110
References	112
List of Annexures	121
Annexure 1:	Letter of ethical clearance	121
Annexure 2:	Interview Schedule	122
Annexure 3:	Informed Consent.....	123
Annexure 4:	Authorisation by EAPA-SA Board.....	124
Annexure 5:	Data Storage Form.....	125

Annexure 6: Letter from Editor..... 126

List of Figures

Figure 1: Professional qualification.....	67
Figure 2: EAPA SA classification	68
Figure 3: Years in EAP practice.....	69
Figure 4: Current job sector.....	69

List of Tables

Table 3.4: Summary of themes and sub-themes.....	71
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Chapter 1

1. General Background of the Study

1.1 Executive summary

This chapter provides a brief contextual overview to the study, which explores the perceptions of employee assistance practitioners regarding the developmental social welfare (DSW) approach in Gauteng Province. The perceptions and experiences referred to herein are drawn from the sample participants, who are comprised of Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) practitioners registered with the Employee Assistance Programme Association of South Africa (EAPA-SA) in Gauteng Province. The rationale for the study is informed by the fact that EAP practitioners are made up of a kaleidoscope of practitioners and professionals practicing within the field, each possessing different theoretical and practical knowledge and skills sets whilst working towards similar goals. These goals however are not informed by a single framework or approach, such as the DSW approach. The study undertakes to explore and unpack practitioners' perceptions regarding the DSW approach to understand the potential gains and challenges associated with the adoption of a singular approach informed by the social welfare policy in South Africa. This chapter also provides further insight into the full purpose of the study followed by the research problem, research methodology adopted and research design utilised within the study.

1.2 Introduction

The impression may exist among social service practitioners that employee assistance practitioners do not work according to the DSW approach, as prescribed by government through the White Paper for Social Welfare. Most literature and research pertaining to Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) offer insight into programme design, focus on the operationalisation and impact of programmes, or

seeks to investigate return on investment models of such programmes. Whilst the researcher has found that many programme and intervention-specific research papers refer back to a theoretical framework, the Employee Assistance field has not yet adopted or strongly associated itself with one particular framework. As a result, there appears to be limited research within the field of social work, inclusive of occupational social work. There is however an abundance of literature and research findings which examine and discuss the DSW approach in the context of social service practice. Literature pertaining to EAPs in relation to the DSW approach and practice is thus limited. The peculiarity around this, which sparked the interest of the researcher is that all three categories of practitioners – EAP practitioners, social workers and occupational social workers, all work and operate within the same reality – the EAP industry.

The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) played an important guiding role in South Africa's transformation in the context of social welfare policy. It highlights a number of key considerations which are aimed at guiding the delivery of social welfare services. One of the key underpinnings within the White Paper for Social Welfare is the adoption of the developmental approach to social welfare services (Draft Framework for Social Welfare Services, 2010:8). According to the Draft Framework for Social Welfare Services (2010:5), the development of this framework presents an opportunity to enhance the nature, scope, extent and level of integrated social welfare services that social service practitioners should be delivering. The framework seeks to facilitate/guide the implementation of a comprehensive, integrated, rights-based, well-resourced, and quality developmental social welfare services". With the aforementioned in mind, the researcher is of the view that the Employee Assistance profession is therefore in a position to easily align the principles within this framework and positively contribute to the achievement of goals within the framework through its workings in the private sector. Not only is the Employee Assistance profession's contribution noteworthy for the sake of continued collaboration between the public and private sector, but also due to the fact that collaborative efforts such as these result in a reduction of dependence otherwise solely place on Government from an accountability and financial perspective. For this reason, the researcher seeks to understand how EAP practitioners perceive the DSW approach and explore whether or not the approach influences EAP practice.

The Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development was first established in South Africa in 1994. With it, a welfare policy known as the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997) was developed and implemented; however, due to the political factors and challenges with the implementation strategy at play at the time, many obstacles were presented with few solutions. According to Patel (2005:96), “The process of developing national policy was a complex one as it involved the mediation of divergent sentiments, histories, philosophies and paradigmatic perspective and professional, organisational and sectorial interest of various kinds”. Similarly, Lombard (2008:159) points out that the conceptual confusion around the developmental welfare approach cannot be under-estimated and further adds that social workers who made attempts to move their practice models in the direction of the DSW approach were further challenged to also integrate socio-economic interventions into their programmes during the same timeframe. Despite these challenges, the DSW approach materialised and presented a framework and guide in terms of implementing change.

In order for practice models to be adapted, changed or enhanced to tie in with the guidelines set out within the approach, critical consideration of the key features and themes of the approach became essential. The DSW approach aimed to address issues which impact South Africans at an individual and group (macro and micro) level from a social, economic and political perspective. Patel (2015:82) indicates that the South African approach to DSW is based on five fundamental themes, namely: an approach focused on the relationship between economic and social development, democratic citizen participation, social pluralism, commitment to social development partnerships, and bridging the gap between micro-macro practices, all of which are encompassed in this rights-based approach. Ten years later, a review of the implementation of the White Paper for Social Welfare was undertaken which found that some progress had been made. However, Lombard (2008:166) also confirmed within her review that, “Although developmental social welfare can celebrate many achievements, the challenges to effectively implementing the White Paper for Social Welfare are ongoing”.

The National Development Plan (RSA, National Planning Commission, 2012:336), referred to as the NPD henceforth, discusses DSW services and points out that South Africa’s statistical indicators indicate a rise in a number of disturbing social

factors which spans across various social issues such as violence, poverty and unemployment. The NDP (National Planning Commission, 2012) further explicates that the mishmash of inadequate social welfare services along with these social issues produces heightened problems and debauched behaviour which hamper social cohesion. Closely linked, the Integrated Service Delivery Model (Department of Social Development, 2005:6) specifies that all services rendered under the auspices of the model should be defined in terms of broad categories according to the level of interventions such as preventative services, early intervention services, and statutory, residential and alternative care and reconstruction, including aftercare.

Since EAPs operate within workplaces, there is a definite opportunity, and responsibility placed on work organisations to focus on both the social and economic development of people formally employed. Employee assistance programmes are able to achieve this by means of ensuring that employees and/or their family members who present with issues are educated, empowered and assisted. Furthermore, EAPs are in a unique position to assist employees in avoiding disciplinary measures which may lead to loss of income and dependence on the social welfare system, which they do by applying proactive tools and reactive interventions as soon as an issue is identified. This responsibility includes concepts such as encouraging democratic citizen participation and driving programmes which form developmental partnerships. In addition, EAPA-SA (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010) also differentiate between the types of services as alluded to within the Integrated Service Delivery Model (Department of Social Development, 2005). Although the employee and EAP relationship is largely a transactional relationship, the implications of such development provide for overlapping benefit to society at large. Rwomire ([Sa]: 4) supports the notion of economic and social development by stating that all nations require both social and economic resources in order to achieve their desired national development goals, and further adds that social work has the ability to intercede the process of development by means of enabling individuals and the larger society.

Patel (2015:92) further adds that democratic citizen participation should be seen as a key principle of the developmental approach to social welfare in as far as social and economic development aspects are concerned. Likewise, active citizenship could find expression at both individual and collective levels, which in solidarity could

greatly improve human wellbeing. Once again, any work organisation that offers EAP services should thus also form part of the greater social welfare system, which is currently focused on creating and enabling active citizen participation in a democratic manner. This is closely linked to the idea of creating partnerships which create social development. Social pluralism has its place within this discussion. Midgley (2007: 154) asserts that reconstructionists have successfully managed to argue that in any society, the state should be actively involved in social welfare, however it should support alternative provisions when extended by other structures.

The EAPA-SA (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010) comprises a number of core technologies which include but are not limited to clinical, non-clinical and preventative services, which in turn include multiple aspects such as trauma services, short-term interventions, referrals, networking and preventative services. In order to deliver such services, EAPs are required to have formed partnerships spanning several private and public sector service providers which allow for services to be rendered. These types of partnerships, if formed and maintained correctly, may be mutually beneficial. From the brief discussion above, it can be concluded that much progress has been made in terms of the introduction of the approach through the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997). However, as pointed out by Lombard (2008:154), most of the challenges experienced by social workers specifically stem from the manner in which the approach had been implemented and integrated.

During the same timeframe, Kruger and Van Breda (2001) published an occupational social work practice model (OSWPM) for the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) in an attempt to guide SANDF social workers in functioning outside of the limited scope of micro practice, a model better suited for their specific work environment. Briefly, social work specific literature seemingly refers to the field of occupational social work (OSW) as a specialised field of practice which aims at serving human needs of a working community through workplace and other interventions. According to Netting, Kettner and Memurity (1998:157), occupational social work involves assisting employees, their families and management with challenges that relate to the social functioning of human relationships in the workplace. The OSWPM model was based on four guiding principles which were retrospectively critiqued as not being in alignment with the DSW approach adopted

within the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997). Kruger and Van Breda (2001: 949) describe their guiding principles as being focused instead on:

- Restorative interventions, which aim to address people who have non-work-related problems and seek to restore harmony at an individual, group, family or community level,
- Promotive interventions, which similarly aim to restore and address individual or employee challenges (within the SANDF context), but also to improve functioning of the individual/employee at a social level by means of prevention, education and developmental interventions,
- Work-person interventions, which strongly introduce the workplace as a contributing environment. Here, Van Breda and Kruger place emphasis on the relationship between individuals/employees and systems within the workplace, and lastly
- Workplace interventions such as managerial training for example, in which exclusive focus is placed on the workplace environment, its structures and policies.

Following several suggestions by various researchers stating that the OSWPM discussed above does not 'fit' with the DSW approach, Van Breda and du Plessis (2009) undertook a critique of the OSWPM from a DSW view. In concluding the critique, Van Breda and du Plessis (2009:332) offered the following recommendations: "A number of adjustments to the OSWPM are required to be better aligned with the developmental approach to social welfare in South African. These do not require an abandonment of the model, but rather a series of adjustments, some of which are more a question of orientation than practice".

In a paper presented at the ASASWEI Annual Conference, Van Breda (2007:1) outlined six implications of DSW for OSW for consideration in practice. These implications entail discussions and interventions relating to working across the micro-meso-macro continuum as opposed to focusing on case work or individual interventions; increasing participation in decision-making on behalf of both the employer and employee; empowering vulnerable groups as these exist within the work setting, i.e. persons with disabilities; promoting economic development among

the working population through the use of training, facilitations and promotion of self-development practices; generating meaningful work by consistently reminding employees of their value and importance to the organisation and society at large and, lastly, mobilising a conducive working milieu by acknowledging every aspect and contributing factor on a personal, occupational and environmental level. The abovementioned seeks to better align the OSW practitioner with the goals and objectives of the developmental approach. In addition, an analysis of the day-to-day role of the OSW practitioner in correlation with the 'broad' definitions of DSW in South Africa illustrates that the OSW practitioner's role and function within business (the workplace) today is not only essential, but also assumes a natural shift towards the approach. In discussing the above implications of the DSW for OSW, Van Breda (2007:1) also pointed out however that the DSW approach appears to have overlooked employees (those currently formally employed) and interprets this as a shortcoming of the approach. In concluding the critique of the OSWPM, Van Breda and du Plessis (2009:32-333) recommended that the model should place greater emphasis on the importance of looking into rights within the workplace, considering the real economic and social impact of, for example, salaries and the level of democracy and participation at work (the constant power dynamic within the workplace) in order to better align itself with the goals of DSW in achieving the goals advocated in the White Paper for Social Welfare.

Much like the OSWPM, EAPs function exclusively within the world of work with a few characteristic differences. Employee assistance programmes historically stem from occupational alcohol prevention programmes as far back as 1935. Govender (2009:13) states the historical development in EAPs in South Africa has been convoluted in nature in that it has evolved from social welfare; more specifically, a combination of occupational social welfare, human capital management, mental health and occupation health and safety. Govender (2009:13) continues by stating that EAPs with different forms exist in different parts of South Africa, the form of which is dependent on the roles and grades of EAP practitioners in different workplaces.

The EAPA-SA was established in 1996, where the immediate undertaking was set out to be the development of a standards document which aimed to provide a guideline to EAP practitioners for EAP Programmes (Standards Committee of EAPA-

SA, 2010:19). The first EAPA-SA standards document developed in 1999, which was later revised, provides guidelines that are categorised within the standards document under eight themes. The most relevant but not exclusive theme linked to this study includes clinical, non-clinical and preventative services. These aspects have the potential to be closely aligned to the DSW approach in practice. The overarching purpose of the EAPA-SA Standards Committee (2010) serves a number of functions which include: to provide a benchmark for EAP practice, to map out the scope of practice, to promote high-quality programmes, to guide EAP membership, to operationalise programme standards and, lastly, to enhance the quality and functionality of programmes.

As Attridge (2012:441) states, “Many employees suffer from emotional issues, family and home life conflicts, mental health concerns, substance abuse problems, and other health disorders that can interfere with doing their work effectively”. This statement indicates that there is a strong need and business case for EAP services in the world of work, the benefits of which have the potential to impact employees at an individual, familial and community level. Jacobson and Attridge (2010:12) further add that, “EAPs help to form the foundation to support an employer’s most valuable asset – its employees”. Companies are realising that the most important asset is their employees, therefore maintaining their physical health and mental well-being is crucial. Views by Jacobson and Attridge (2010) were already pointed out by du Plessis (1999:19), when she stated: “There are two major contexts from which to analyse the development of occupational social work in South Africa. The first context refers to the ‘welfare systems’, whilst the second relates to the management of people at work”.

From the literature above, it is evident that non-regulatory guidelines exist to guide EAP policy and practice. However, due to the fluidity that exists within the EAP field, spanning registration as a practitioner to social welfare policy, a solid research agenda is required to build a theoretical base in order to guide EAP practitioners in terms of their practice models, and henceforth aligning it as far as possible to the DSW in a similar fashion to the OSWPM. At the core of both the social welfare approach and the principles underpinning EAPs are similar objectives. Employee assistance programmes primarily service the needs of two client bases: the organisation and employees. Little to no research has been done in terms of EAP

practice and the DSW approach specifically, however literature such as that of Van Breda and Kruger (2007) linking OSW and the DSW approach exists. The researcher is of the view that there is potential for EAP practitioners and providers to align their strategies and programmes with the principles embedded in the DSW approach. The researcher seeks to understand how EAP practitioners view the approach, and in so doing explore this apparent gap and provide recommendations for further research or considerations for practice within the EAP field.

1.3 Definition of concepts

EAP

The international Employee Assistance Professionals Association (2003) defines EAP as a worksite-based programme designed to assist organisations in addressing productivity issues and employees in identifying and resolving personal issues including health, marital, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress or other personal issues which may affect job performance. Similarly, EAPA-SA (2010:1) defines an EAP as, “the work organisation’s resource that utilises specific core technologies to enhance employee and workplace effectiveness through preventions, identification and resolution of personal and productivity issues”.

EAP Practitioner

An EAP practitioner is described by EAPA-SA (2010:2) as “a person (not necessarily professionally trained) performing EAP-specific or related tasks, i.e. referral, liaison, training, marketing, evaluating”.

Occupational Social Work

Social work literature refers to the field of occupational social work (OSW) as a specialised field of practice which aims at serving human needs of a working community through workplace and other interventions. According to Netting, Kettner

and Memurity (2007), OSW involves assisting employees, their families and management with challenges that relate to the social functioning and human relationships in the workplace.

Developmental Social Welfare Approach

The White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997) describes the developmental social welfare approach as one which results in “a humane, peaceful, just and caring society which will uphold welfare rights, facilitate the meeting of basic human needs, release people’s creative energies, help them achieve their aspirations, build human capacity and self-reliance and participate fully in all spheres of social, economic and political life”. Midgley (2013:3) explains that adopting a developmental approach is usually used in social policy—as is the case with this approach, to refer to social improvements brought about by government in the interest of a nation’s welfare. He further adds that this type of approach to welfare is characteristic of all recent discussions among social policy writers on what is called ‘welfare developmentalism’. Midgley and Conley (2010:14) highlight an imperative distinction between developmental social welfare and social development by explaining that a fundamental difference exists between developmental social work and social development, although the two approaches are closely linked. This difference is evident in that social development holds a broader interdisciplinary field with a broader set of activities. When compared to social development, Gray (1998:2) describes the framework as a system which requires a sincere commitment to working towards eradicating or at least minimising poverty in South Africa, and continues by stating that several contributions have been made which amalgamate into an indigenous theory of developmental social work.

Gauteng Province

Collins English Dictionary Online (2016) defines the Gauteng Province as, “A province of N South Africa; formed in 1994 from part of the former province of Transvaal: service industries, mining and manufacturing. Capital: Johannesburg.

Population: 8 847 740 (2004 estimate). Area: 18 810 square kilometres (7 267 square miles)".

1.4 Theoretical framework

The study is embedded in the social development approach which forms its theoretical framework. Midgley (2013:13) defines social development as, "A process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population as a whole within the context of a dynamic multifaceted development process". Similarly, Lombard's (2007:299) definition of social development states that it is "distinguished as (1) an ultimate (end) goal of development activities; and (2) as an appropriate approach to social welfare and thus an intervention strategy that incorporates social and economic processes to achieve social development as its ultimate goal". Patel and Hochfeld (2013:691-964) support this view and point out that the White Paper for Social Welfare outlines a social development approach to welfare services, which can be described overall as pro-poor and informed by a rights orientation. The foundation of this approach is the state's constitutional obligation to address inequity and discrimination in access to services and in meeting the basic needs of the population. Geyer and Lombard (2014:343) state that social development indicators assist by providing a framework, although broad in nature, to determine how policy content can be aligned with a social development perspective in order to guide aligned implementation towards a common goal. The approach in its entirety, including the five fundamental themes as highlighted by Patel (2015:125), provides an indication that EAPs, much like other social service counterparts, have the opportunity to align themselves with the approach; however, further research is required in order to verify the feasibility hereof.

Although cited very early on in South Africa's transformational years, Midgley (1995:23) posits that, "unlike social philanthropy and social work, social development does not cater only to needy individuals but seeks to enhance the wellbeing of the whole population". Although such a view may spark debate, which is not the intent of this study, a very similar undertone has been adopted by EAPA-SA (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010) in defining the role of an EAP as mentioned above.

With this, the researcher is of the view that the social developmental approach is the best-suited approach to utilise within and to frame this study.

1.5 Rationale of the study

The adoption of the DSW framework as stipulated in the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997) posed several challenges for social services professionals in terms of implementation. These challenges have been well documented and discussed over the past 17 years, with particular reference to social work practice from a statutory and, to a lesser degree, the occupational social work point of view. Little consideration has been given to the experiences and practice of EAP practitioners regarding their perceptions about the framework and the possible opportunity to align programmes offered by EAPs with the objectives of the framework.

In exploring the role and functions of an EAP practitioner, it is evident that there is a definite link between EAP practice and occupational social work, both of which may possibly have implications (direct or indirect) and contributions towards the DSW approach in practice.

Despite the aforementioned challenges faced by social service professionals, those operating within the EAP field with decision-making ability in terms of EAP strategy, scope and programmes may consciously or subconsciously be geared towards interventions or programmes which support the DSW approach. In the long run, this could make for a powerful triad displaying benefits for the employer, employee and DSW, but with specific reference to EAPs.

As indicated in earlier sections, EAPA-SA (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010) provides broad guidelines in terms of suitable candidates for EAP practice and further draws distinction between EAP professionals and EAP practitioners. The challenge with this approach is the reality that the EAP field is comprised of a wide variety of professionals employed in EAP practitioner roles. In supporting this notion, du Plessis (1999:25) states that whilst social workers appear to be the preferred profile for EAP practitioner roles, nurses, psychologists as well as human capital

officers are able to fulfil the role as well. Similarly, Patel (2015:124) adds that the goal of developmental welfare is to achieve the wider societal and global goal of human well-being and human security. The social development approach to social welfare, according to Patel, adopts a broad approach and acknowledges the multi-sectorial and multi-disciplinary nature of social development, which in the South African context is comprised of an array of different professions and paraprofessionals.

This lack of regulation may in itself create the biggest challenge for the EAP field and practitioners aiming to align EAP practice with the DSW approach, however this has yet to be researched.

Therefore, the following research question will inform the study: “What are the perceptions of EAP practitioners in the Gauteng Province regarding the developmental social welfare approach?”

Taking the above into account, the researcher aimed to understand whether or not EAP practitioners in Gauteng see a link between the DSW approach and EAP practice and if there are existing gaps that need to be explored and understood in order to form a solid supposition. In order to reach an evidence-based conclusion on the matter, an explorative study of the views and experiences of employee assistance practitioners must be conducted regarding possible alignment in terms of EAP programmes and strategies.

1.6 Goal and objectives of the study

The goal of this study is to explore and describe employee assistance practitioners' perceptions of the developmental social welfare approach in Gauteng Province.

Objectives of the study

In order to achieve the desired goal of this study, the researcher aimed to fulfil the following objectives:

- To contextualise concepts such as EAPs in relation to the DSW approach which deals with numerous aspects and services of social welfare in a South African context;
- Explore and describe EAP practitioners' perceptions and views of the DSW approach;
- Explore and understand whether or not the DSW themes could influence EAPs in practice. Specific themes to be explored include: enhancing preventative services, adaptation of clinical EAP services to lean towards a developmental approach, social and economic development of EAP users, and ways in which EAPs can contribute towards bridging the gap between micro and macro practice;
- To make recommendations based on research findings in order to enhance EAP practice in South Africa.

1.7 Research approach

For the purpose of this study, the researcher adopted the qualitative research approach which is exploratory in nature. Creswell (2009:173-174) provides a checklist-type summary of the characteristics of qualitative research. These characteristics include considerations such as an understanding of the natural setting in which data will be collected (as opposed to quantitative research where data is collected in a contrived situation); where the researcher is a key instrument in data collection; where multiply sources of data are used including interviews, observations and documents; where indicative data analysis are employed and an interpretive enquiry style is adopted when interpreting data. Creswell (2009:176) further adds that beyond the general characteristics described above, there are very specific strategies of inquiry used when employing the qualitative approach which are distinct in the data collection and analysis phase of the inquiry.

Neuman (2011:165) asserts that it is important to be mindful of the fact that qualitative and quantitative research give rise to what he refers to as "different

languages of research”. Quantitative research is concerned with explaining phenomena and verifying the findings in a numerical or statistical output. Aliaga and Gunderson (2004: 1) in Muijs offer a definition which expands on the purpose of quantitative research: “Quantitative research is explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically-based methods, particularly statistics”. Adopting a quantitative approach to this study provided valuable data sets in terms of understanding the number of EAP practitioners who would or do align their EAP services to the objectives of the DSW approach. Such data, however, will not inform or influence practice or research within the field as there would be no understanding or context to measure the data against.

Since this paper aimed to explore the perceptions of EAP practitioners with specific reference to the DSW, the qualitative research approach was deemed suitable as it yielded in-depth and detailed meaning as opposed to pure statistical or scientific data. The qualitative research design was therefore regarded as more advantageous for the purpose of this study. A qualitative approach also allowed a sense of flexibility in terms of data collection and data analysis methods, which reinforced and encouraged participants to expand on their responses and individual insights.

Based on the above, the researcher held the view that the qualitative research approach was most suited to the study as it would provide the necessary depth and detail required to understand details linked to the perceptions held by the EAP practitioners in Gauteng Province. Whilst this study could have been adapted and positioned as a quantitative study, the findings thereof would produce little to no understanding unless prior studies had been conducted from a qualitative or mixed methods stance.

1.8 Type of research

Ulin, Robinson and Tolley (2005:5) describe applied research as a type of research which informs action and enhances decision-making in practical issues; unlike basic research, which is conducted to produce knowledge or create theory. The goal of this study is to explore and understand the experiences and perceptions of EAP

practitioners in order to make a sound contribution towards informing decisions taken in practice. Furthermore, the study aims to understand whether or not the DSW approach can influence and/or impact EAP practice and decision-making processes, which are all practical issues as opposed to theoretically-based facts.

By employing an applied approach, the researcher aims to reach a specific understanding of EAP practitioners' perceptions towards the DSW. In so doing, the researcher aims to provide practical insights and recommendations in terms of potential gaps or linkages between EAP practice and the DSW, with the view that such a contribution could lead to future research and practical considerations within the EAP field.

1.9 Research design

The study, which is qualitative and -exploratory in nature employed a case study design. Creswell, Hanson, Plano-Clark and Morales (2007:245) describe case study research as, "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and reports a case description and case-based themes".

The rationale and motivation for selecting this design is that the researcher was interested in understanding the views of a number of EAP practitioners regarding the DSW approach. Kumar (2011:126) advises that a case study comprises of a case that could refer to a group, individual, an instance or a community. To be referred to as a case study however, it is essential that the researcher regard the entire study population as representative of a single entity. EAP practitioners by default form part of such a bounded system, the work environment. The interest of the study does not lie in the individual views of each EAP practitioner, but rather in in-depth collective views of EAP practitioners regarding the DSW approach. Creswell, Hanson, Plano-Clark and Morales (2007:246) highlight that qualitative case studies are distinguished by the size of the bounded case as well as the intent of the case analysis. The researcher has elected to utilise this design, as the study considers the views and perceptions of EAP practitioners in relation to the DSW approach along

with the accompanying objectives of the approach. This is supported by Fouché and Schurink (2011:320), who position the case study design as a design which is more concerned with what is to be studied rather than how it will be studied.

An advantage of employing this design lies in the possibility that it may contribute in connecting actions or decision-making processes of EAP practitioners with the larger scale needs of a society as set out in the objectives of the DSW approach. Neuman's (2000:32) view supports the researchers' thinking by postulating that the case study design aids researchers in connecting micro level structures with macro level structures. An advantageous aspect of this design lies in the findings of the research, which can be disproved altogether, replicated to explore and understand the perceptions of EAP practitioners in other provinces, or regarded as a representation of EAP practitioners in a specific EAPA-SA chapter as a whole. The disadvantage however lies in the fact that the case study design implies that the findings can only be broadly generalised to similar cases, meaning that they cannot be viewed as an overarching finding relating to all EAP practitioners in South Africa as the population and external factors change. Creswell (2007:246) emphasises that qualitative case studies are distinguished by both the size of the bounded case as well as the intent of the case analysis. The researcher had elected to utilise a collective case study as it presented an opportunity to consider the views and perceptions of EAP practitioners in relation to the DSW and the accompanying objectives of the themes therein.

1.10 Data collection

The researcher utilised semi-structured interviews as the data collection method. The study aims to understand the perceptions of EAP practitioners with reference to the DSW approach. The EAP practitioners or sample population was recruited indirectly by the EAPA-SA board on behalf of the researcher. Greeff (2011:351) positions semi-structured interviews as a flexible means to gather a detailed view of participants' perceptions, beliefs or accounts of a specific topic.

In utilising this data collection method, the researcher elected to use a research instrument, commonly referred to as a semi-structured interview schedule, as well as a digital recorder to record verbal communication during the interviews. The digital recorder forms an essential part during the data analysis phase in terms of verifying information recorded by both the researcher and participant. The schedule was used as a guide during the interviews through the use of a predetermined set of open-ended questions. These questions were focused around the five key themes which underpin the DSW approach, with specific reference to the practitioner's view and perceptions in relation to EAP practice. These key themes being: the embodiment of a rights-based approach, impact on economic and social development, encouraging a culture of active democratic citizenship, social pluralism and bridging the gap between the macro and micro divide.

In order to achieve this, the researcher designed her own interview schedule as opposed to using a schedule available in the public domain in order to meet the specific need of this study. The researcher holds the view that a semi-structured interview schedule will be best suited for this purpose. Hardon, Hodgkin and Fresle (2004:28) point out that semi-structured interviews hold a number of strengths, for example the depth of information provided, which allows participants to introduce new issues and provides the researcher with the opportunity to probe. Similarly, they add that some of the disadvantages of using semi-structured interviews include (but are not limited to): the analysis of findings can be challenging and time consuming, the researcher must avoid bias at all costs, and it is difficult to generalise findings.

1.11 Data analysis

De Vos (2011:333) describes data analysis as the process of bringing structure and significance to a mass of data that is collected. With specific reference to data analysis of collective case study data, as is the case of this study, Kohlbacher (2006:21) stresses that the position of the data and the development of broader categories and themes are important steps in the data analysis phases in order to allow the researcher to organise the data around important themes, questions or topics. Similarly, Creswell et al. (2007:248) describe data analysis within a collective

case study design as a process of bringing structure, order and meaning to collected data. The researcher aims to employ five steps of qualitative data analysis as suggested by Creswell (2009:177-179) in analysing the data. These steps include: collecting and recording of data; managing and transcribing data throughout the process; reading, reflecting and writing memorandums after each interview; describing, classifying and interpreting interviews and, lastly, presenting or illustrating findings.

The researcher applied Creswell's five steps of analysis by first briefing the participants on the interview process and gaining informed consent. Thereafter, the researcher informed participants of the data collection instrument to be utilised, namely a semi-structured interview schedule. The researcher utilised each interview question within the schedule as a means to probe detailed information during the interview process. This assisted in developing important themes, questions and topics. The researcher then acquired permission to record all interview sessions by means of a digital recording device as well as by taking detailed notes prior to the commencement of each session to assist in the analysis phases. The researcher holds the view that taking notes and recording the interview sessions was a beneficial tool during the data analysis phase of the study.

Throughout this process, the researcher has considered the concept of trustworthiness. With rigour, reliability and validity being key concepts underpinning the trustworthiness of research, it is important that adequate focus be given to methods employed to ensure this. Thomas and Magilvy (2011:151) describe qualitative rigour as a means to establish confidence and trust in the findings of research study results. Various models exist which address this matter. One example is the model of trustworthiness in qualitative research proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Their model addresses four components of trustworthiness which remain relevant to qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

Carcary (2009:12) states that within qualitative research, the researcher is actively involved and attempts to understand and explain social phenomena. Carcary (2009:12) further explains that, "Validity of data generation is concerned with how appropriate a specific research method is for answering the research questions and

providing explanations. On the other hand, validity of interpretation of the data is concerned with how convincing the researcher's interpretations of the data may be". Similarly, in a review of trustworthiness within qualitative research, Lietz, Langer and Furman (2006:441) stress that as qualitative studies become more and more popular within social work, researchers within the field must consider the issue of rigor within this type of inquiry.

Shenton (2004:1) holds the position that it is not uncommon for the trustworthiness of a qualitative study to be critiqued or questioned. He suggests that this may be due to the fact that validity and reliability are not addressed in the same way as what he refers to as naturalist works. In the interest of validating the credibility of this study, the researcher aims to employ the use of several strategies to ensure trustworthiness during the research process. Given and Saumure (2008:896) posit that the concept of trustworthiness is vital as it allows qualitative researchers to ensure that transferability (the need to be aware of the scope of the study in context), dependability (setting out to conduct a research in such a way), conformability (ensuring that the interpretations and the actual findings are on par) and credibility (accurately and richly describes the phenomena and findings) are evident in their research.

In terms of research methodology, the researcher employed purposive stratified sampling. According to Cohen and Crabtree (2006:1), purposive stratified sampling has the ability to boost the credibility of a study.

They argue that when sufficient information is known which allows the researcher to identify specific features, it has the ability to influence the way in which that phenomenon is manifest. In reviewing the credibility of this type of study in relation to data collection, Lietz et al. (2006:448-449) explain that during the data collection and analysis process, it is important to manage any threats to trustworthiness, which, as their study found, can be achieved by the researcher keeping a trail of every step of the process that is thoroughly described within the research report. They further suggest that utilising an audit trail throughout the decision-making process will allow the researcher the freedom to make necessary decisions and adjustments along the way, stressing that details of such decision need to be clearly described.

Credibility, like internal validity is the element that allows others to recognise the true experiences within the study through the interpretation of participants' own experiences. According to Thomas and Magilvy (2011:152), in order to establish credibility, a researcher will review the individual transcripts, looking for similarities within and across study participants. Noble and Smith (2015:34) add that assessing the reliability of research findings requires the researcher to make rigorous judgments of their findings in relation to the application of the chosen method. The researcher aims to achieve this by thoroughly checking and rechecking the interpretation and use of data collected. Member-checking strategies will also be utilised by the researcher in order to ensure that the views of the participants have not been misinterpreted or misrepresented. This will be achieved by allowing the research participants an opportunity to review the analysis and confirm or challenge the level of accuracy of the data as portrayed by the researcher.

The data analysis of this specific study is crucial as the researcher aims to understand the perceptions of the participants using a semi-structured interview schedule. This in essence means that the rigor, credibility and trustworthiness of the study need to remain top of mind for the researcher. Research participants will be exposed to various elements such as the environment, the interview and the interview schedule during the interview. The researcher will therefore endeavour to accurately encapsulate verbal, nonverbal and written feedback as thoroughly and accurately as possible.

In addition, the researcher will employ reflexivity, with the understanding that this involves considering and making explicit her own views and perspectives regarding the study. In support hereof, Lietz et al. (2006:448) impart the view that if qualitative researchers do not consider the way in which their own views may influence the way they view the perceptions or viewpoints of participants, the risk of losing or overlooking vital information presents itself. An additional strategy the researcher utilised is commonly referred to as triangulation. Lietz et al. (2006:451) encourage the use of triangulation through observation and go on to suggest that two or more individuals should review and analyse the data presented. This suggestion is supported by the view that the triangulation process creates an opportunity for differences and commonalities to be identified. The student, together with the

research supervisor, had endeavoured to ensure that every opportunity to exercise reflexivity and triangulation is exploited.

The researcher holds the view that adopting the strategies described above reinforced and ensured trustworthiness, thereby strengthening the findings of the study.

1.12 Pilot study

Fouché and Delport (2011:73) describe a pilot study as a dressed recital for the main inquiry. The pilot study aims to serve as a small-scale version of the planned study in order to identify gaps and challenges that may not have been considered by the researcher prior to the commencement of the study. The researcher undertook a research pilot study by making use of an independent unit of analysis, with the intention of the findings thereof being excluded from the main study.

The unit of analysis in the pilot study fulfilled the same criteria as that of the main study. This is to say, potential participants of the pilot study are all EAP practitioners currently registered as members of EAPA-SA, working in Gauteng. There are no specific requirements with regard to professional qualification or accreditation for inclusion in this study. The researcher will obtain a list of such practitioners from EAPA-SA and utilise the first two of these individuals as participants in the pilot study. Strydom and Delport (2011:394-395) further highlight that there are four main aspects of a pilot study that need to be incorporated in qualitative research. These aspects include: reviewing the feasibility of the study, testing the chosen measuring instrument – in this instance, the interview schedule, reviewing the literature and, lastly, consulting with field experts.

Arain, Campbell, Cooper and Gillian (2010:1) briefly define and position a pilot study as a small-scale study which aims to assist in the design of a further confirmatory study. They further add that pilot studies have various purposes including testing all study procedures, the validity of tools as well as assisting in calculating the sample size to be employed. For the purpose of this pilot study, the researcher aims to conduct a thorough review of current literature. As Strydom (2011:238) points out,

the review of literature is important in order to clearly formulate the problem to be explored. Moreover, it also guides researchers in terms of the expectation and implementation of the study, which may safeguard against the reconstruction of existing research. In addition, the student sort the guidance of subject matter experts currently working within the social development, social work and EAP field so as to gain an understanding of their views and cross reference any aspects of the study which may have been overlooked.

1.13 Description of population, sample and method

For this study, the research population comprised of EAP practitioners who hold EAPA-SA membership. The participants are EAP practitioners currently working in Gauteng, South Africa.

The researcher employed a purposive stratified sampling technique. More specifically, the researcher is of the view that purposive sampling is best suited for this study. Strydom and Delport (2011:392) explain that in purposive sampling, the sample is solely based on the opinion of the researcher regarding the attributes of the population that most thoroughly serve the purpose of the study. Although the development social welfare approach is closely linked to social services practitioners, the researcher is of the view that no limitation should be placed on the professional affiliation of EAP practitioners who form part of the study population in as far as sampling criteria are concerned. EAP practitioners from other fields and disciplines, such as psychologists and nurses for example would provide valuable insight into the study as these professionals are active in the field of EAP as practitioners.

In considering the population for this study, the researcher acknowledges that the size of the sample population is already known, as the EAPA-SA board holds a full listing of its South African member base. This in the researcher's view warrants the adoption of a purposive stratified sampling technique. Similarly, Cohen and Crabtree (2006:1) suggest that a researcher may purposefully sample specific practices and stratify the sample by size and profession. They further stress that it is important to acknowledge that purposive stratified sampling differs from stratified random

sampling and is more often utilised in quantitative studies in that the sample sizes are likely to be too small to result in generalisation. The applicable sampling criteria would include: confirmation that the participant holds a valid EAPA-SA membership, that the participant should be well versed in verbal and written English ability, and that the participant would need to have a minimum of one year's membership with EAPA-SA. In order to achieve this, the researcher has requested the permission of EAPA-SA board members to obtain a list of all EAPA-SA members currently working in the Gauteng region. By utilising this population, the rigour of the study has been increased as EAPA-SA members are representative of both private and public sector practitioners.

The researcher used a sample size of approximately 15 to 20 EAP practitioners indirectly selected via the EAPA-SA board. The researcher had anticipated that a realistic sample would have equated to a maximum of 15 EAP practitioners, however external factors negatively impacted the sample population and consideration had to be given to utilising an alternative 'pool' of participants in order to meet the needs of the study. Saturation of data was also considered in the final decision regarding the sample size.

1.14 Ethical aspects

Strydom (2011:114) defines ethics as, "a set of widely accepted moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group that sets out rules and expectations about the most appropriate behaviour towards subjects and respondents as well as other individuals impacted by a study".

Avoidance of harm

A fundamental ethical rule within social research is the avoidance of harm. Strydom (2011:115) explains that all respondents must be informed (beforehand) about any potential harm that can be caused due to the investigation in order to provide them with an opportunity to withdraw from the study should they wish to do so. With

specific reference to this study, Strydom (2011:115) also states, “Participants may experience concrete harm, for instance with regard to their family, relationships or employment situations”. For this reason, the researcher interviewed EAP practitioners based on their personal views as practitioners, with no representation or affiliation to a specific organisation or corporate.

In addition to the above, the researcher aimed to conduct each interview in a setting that is deemed safe, conducive and comfortable to each participant. Whilst this may require travelling on the researcher’s part, it will need to be done in order to allow participants a sense of safety and security during the interviewing process.

Voluntary participation

Strydom (2011:117) points out that even if participants are advised that their inclusion and participation in a particular study is voluntary, some participants may still hold the view that as an individual they still have an obligation to participate. Here, it will be the responsibility of the researcher to thoroughly explain the concept of voluntary participation. This is of particular relevance to this study as the researcher sourced the sample population through a professional body known as EAPA-SA.

Informed consent

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2006:479) suggest that the researcher’s process of seeking mutual agreement from individuals to partake in a research project by providing them with a full understanding of the processes involved is the process of gaining informed consent. The researcher ensured receipt of written and signed permission from the EAPA-SA board members, which was used to source participants, as well as the written and signed consent of each individual participant by means of a thorough explanation and formal notice which outlined the researcher’s details, research intentions, objectives, methodologies, researcher’s desire to audio record sessions, data storage plans, data storage requirements (for a minimum period of 15 years) and possible outcomes in the clearest possible format.

This process allowed each participant the opportunity to decline (as per the ethical consideration discussed above) or to continue with the study.

Violation of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality

Strydom (2011:119) assumes the position that confidentiality, anonymity and the violation of privacy can be viewed as synonymous and continues to draw a distinction by stating that confidentiality denotes the handling of information in a confidential manner, whereas privacy deals with an element of privacy in relation to information of a personal nature. An important consideration based on the nature and methodology of this study is explored by Strydom (2011:120), in which it is stated, "Often requests are received from institution, data banks, professional organisations or other third parties to be given access to the data collected. Such requests can create serious ethical problems concerning privacy and must be carefully accounted for beforehand and documented by way of formal contracting". The researcher, before undertaking the study and in seeking permission from EAPA-SA, had clearly and specifically contracted, in writing, the role of EAPA-SA as a sample source and outlined the limitations around data sharing in order to ensure the ethical standing of the study. In addition, the researcher provided a written statement to each participant in which confidentiality was reassured. The written statement included all factors which may have an impact on confidentiality and anonymity, including the handling and limitations on accessing of digital recordings by the researcher and authorised supervisor, the findings of the research and the possibility of publishing the final research outcome in a manner which does not violate the participants' privacy or anonymity in any way.

Debriefing of respondents

It goes without saying that each participant had been provided with an opportunity to debrief after each session. This process was put in place to allow the participants the opportunity to gain clarity on any issue that remained unclear to them post the interview session. Strydom (2011:122) aptly pointed out that, "Debriefing sessions after the study, during which the subjects get the opportunity to work through their

experiences and its aftermath, is one way in which researchers can assist subjects in minimizing possible harm which may be done in spite of all their precautions against it". In order to ensure that if any participant requires debriefing or additional psychological support as a result of his/her participation in the research, the researcher will provide such. In the event that a participant will require continued counselling post debriefing, the researcher will enter into a referral agreement with a registered associate counsellor to provide the participant with ongoing counselling for the researcher's account. This arrangement had been put in place and formalised with the registered counsellor before the commencement of the data collection process.

Actions and competence of researcher

The researcher believes that she is/was competent to conduct the study based on her academic knowledge, professional registration and professional experience within the EAP and Social Sciences field. The researcher undertook this study under the strict guidance of a university-appointed supervisor after approval by the Faculty Ethics Committee, which the researcher has full confidence in to guide the researcher appropriately.

1.15 Limitations of the study

The researcher identified a population of EAP practitioners for the study which comprised of EAP-SA-registered practitioners based in Gauteng Province. A total of 125 practitioners were invited to partake in the study, of which a total of five declined the invitation to participate and a further 113 did not reply to any of the several requests, which resulted in the study commencing with a total of seven research participants. From this population, it is safe to say that a variety of types of practitioners are represented in terms of academic background, experience and tenure within the EAP field, however a broader population would have certainly yielded far more rigorous findings.

A further limitation to the study was the limited amount of literature available with particular reference to EAP practice. Whilst a variety of literature and resources are available which focus on various aspects of EAPs, these sources in the researcher's experience are either very specific to particular elements of an EAP or were found to be dated. The researcher acknowledges that this does not lend itself to a source's validity or credibility however current, and that contextually-relevant sources would have enhanced the overall findings of this and other research papers in general.

Chapter 2

Literature Review on the Developmental Social Welfare Approach and Employee Assistance Programmes

2.1 Introduction

The approach and structure of this chapter will first provide a brief outline of the history of social development and then the adoption of the developmental social welfare (DSW) approach, as charted by the White Paper for Social Welfare in South Africa (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997). Focus will then shift to employee assistance programmes (EAPs) as well as the standards and policies which frame practice within these fields.

2.2 Conceptualisation of relevant concepts

This paper reflects on two fundamental areas of social service practice. The first area focuses on social development in the context of DSW which will clearly be debated herein; the second will focus on the area of EAPs and social service practice. The two areas of focus debated herein are not limited to a particular profession, instead the paper deals with social services in the South African context i.e. social work, occupational social work, and behavioural risk management with links to employee assistance programme (EAP) settings. For this reason, clear conceptualisation of the areas of focus within this paper is necessary. The succeeding section will briefly outline these concepts as this forms the basis of the theoretical body of knowledge.

Social Development

South Africa has a fairly developed social security system and a rich institutional framework of welfare services delivered by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), such as voluntary welfare organisations, religious organisations, community-based

organisations and informal family and community networks. These organisations have expertise, infrastructure and other resources which could play a significant role in reconstruction and development (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997).

For the purpose of this study, Lombard's (2007:299) definition of social development has been utilised, which suggests that social development be understood as an ultimate goal of development activities that are used as the preferred and most appropriate approach to social welfare, and thus a strategy which incorporates social and economic processes to achieve social development. Gray and Lombard (2008:5) add that social development can, in a nutshell, be seen as an approach which calls for an alignment of social and economic policies. According to the White Paper for Social Welfare in South Africa (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997), the ultimate goal of social development is to create sustainable enhancements in the lives and to the well-being of individuals, family systems, communities and collective societies in an integrated manner.

Based on the aforementioned, the researcher holds the view that the social development approach, which underpins this study, has the potential to create a platform that serves the best interest of our country if applied efficiently with the necessary collaboration across all sectors. Similarly, Dlangamandla (2010:27) stated, "Social development is a process of social improvement incorporating all the levels of society's needs, whether these are physical, economic or societal goals, and that the social and economic aspects reinforce each other and should be mutually integrated to address societal development".

Developmental Social Welfare as a concept

The White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population: Development, 1997) provides the national policy framework for the transformation of the two pillars of South African social welfare: social security, also referred to as social protection, and social welfare services. The White Paper further outlines the approach, which is best described as a pro-poor approach to social development that is informed by a rights orientation.

The goal of developmental social welfare (DSW) is to create a humane, peaceful, just and caring society which will uphold welfare rights, facilitate the meeting of basic human needs, release people's creative energies and help them achieve their aspirations, build human capacity and self-reliance, and participate fully in all spheres of social, economic and political life (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997).

The DSW approach aims to address issues which impact South Africans at an individual and group (micro and macro) level from a social, economic and political perspective. Patel (2015:82) indicates that the South African approach to DSW is based on five fundamental themes, these being: an approach focused on the relationship between economic and social development, democratic citizen participation, social pluralism and commitment to social development partnerships, as well as bridging the gap between micro-macro practice, all of which are encompassed in this rights-based approach.

EAPA-SA

The Employee Assistance Professionals Association, referred to globally as EAPA is the largest professional association available to social service practitioners in the Employee Assistance field of work. EAPA representatives are involved in Employee Assistance chapters in 107 different chapters around the globe. The Employee Assistance Programme Association of South Africa (EAPA-SA), which is an affiliated branch of EAPA International was established in 1997 to provide leadership, strategic direction, professional development and oversight of Employee Assistance practice in South Africa through administration of standards and ethics for practice. It is a registered non-profit company in terms of Section 21 of the Companies Act of 2008. The EAPA-SA is currently the only officially recognised representative for the Employee Assistance profession with a total of eight active chapters across the various provinces of South Africa (EAPA-SA [Sa]).

According to EAPA-SA, "Membership of EAPA-SA is governed by strict principles and takes the form of individual, service provider or affiliate membership. Members are expected to practice according to the national standards and ethics and to

participate in continuous professional development. EAPASA recognises professionals from various disciplines as well as their professional registrations and works together with their Statutory Councils, Professional Associations and other stakeholder entities to ensure excellence in Employee Assistance Practice” (EAPA-SA [Sa]).

EAPs

EAPA-SA (2010:1) defines EAP as, “Employee Assistance is the work organisations resource based on core technologies and functions to enhance employee and workforce effectiveness through prevention, identification and resolution of personal and productivity issues”.

As indicated above, EAPA-SA (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010) provides the basis for all EAP programmes. This comprises six core technologies which include but are not limited to a number of standards within each core focus area. These standards range in subject matter from policy implementation to professional development of practitioners to clinical, non-clinical and preventative services. These core technologies include multiple aspects such as trauma services, short-term interventions, referrals, networking and preventative services. In order to deliver such services, EAPs are required to have formed partnerships spanning several private and public sector service providers which allow for services to be rendered. These types of partnerships, according to the student and if maintained correctly, have the ability to form a solid foundation for the application of a DSW system, as the underlying core technologies are also embedded in the field of DSW.

2.3 Developmental Social Welfare in South Africa: The White Paper for Social Welfare

The Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development was first established in South Africa in 1994. With it, a welfare policy known as the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997) was developed and implemented. However, due to the political factors and challenges with the implementation strategy at play at the time, many obstacles were presented with little solution. Patel (2015:96) imparts, “The process of developing national

policy was a complex one as it involved the mediation of divergent sentiments, histories, philosophies and paradigmatic perspective and professional, organisational and sectorial interest of various kinds". As mentioned in earlier sections of this study, Patel (2015) indicated five key themes within the DSW approach, three of which will be explored herein. Lombard (2008:160) endorses these themes in stating the following, "the key-theme approach supports the premises of this article that social development goals are an integral part of the broader developmental social welfare approach and is both an end goal and an intervention approach".

Lombard, Kemp, Viljoen-Toet and Booyzen (2013:179) position that in demonstrating its commitment to change and transformation in a South African context, the social welfare sector policy, which was developmental, in the form of the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997), aimed to promote peoples welfare, in conjunction with an inclusive process of economic and social development which affirms South Africa's commitment to poverty eradication and elimination of inequality and social justice, amongst other social development objectives.

The first theme within the DSW approach can be referred to as the economic focus. Lombard et al. (2013:183) point out that the economic aspect of the social development approach is embedded in community development activities which require a deliberate strategy that is uncompromising in rendering social development programmes in addition to individual- and family-focused initiatives. They further state that this is essential in protecting systems against creating a culture of expectation and dependency on developmental programmes.

Economic development has to be accompanied by the equitable allocation and distribution of resources if it is to support social development. Social development and economic development are therefore interdependent and mutually reinforcing (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997).

The second key theme falls under the umbrella of democratic participation of citizens. Democratic participation in social and economic development is a crucial premise within the DSW approach (Van Breda & du Plessis, 2009:330). Patel (2015:91) explains democratic citizen participation as a key principle of the developmental approach to social welfare in as far as social and economic

development aspects are concerned. Chikadzi and Pretorius (2011:230) point out that social work, as a social service profession, has made a commitment to equality, social justice and active citizenship. They argue that this commitment is questionable in light of the ongoing dependence on the state and the compromised position of the developmental approach. In the researcher's view, this perceived flaw gives way for EAP services to lend support and alleviate some of the capacity and financial burdens placed on the South African systems. Any work organisation that offers EAP services should be considered to form part of the greater social welfare system. EAP approaches, which are focused on creating and enabling active citizen participation through predominantly preventative- and solution-focused interventions, do so in an independent and democratic manner.

This is closely linked to the idea of creating sustainable partnerships at various levels which help to create active social development. Social pluralism has its place within this discussion as well.

Social pluralism is a third key theme within the DSW approach. Midgley (2007:154) asserts that reconstructionist have successfully managed to argue that in any society, the state should be actively involved in social welfare, however it should also support alternative provisions when extended by other structures.

The National Development Plan (RSA, National Planning Commission, 2012:336), referred to as the NDP henceforth, discusses DSW services and points out that South Africa's statistical indicators indicate a rise in a number of disturbing social factors, which span across a number of social issues such as violence, poverty and unemployment. The NDP (National Planning Commission, 2012) further explicates that the mishmash of inadequate social welfare services along with these social issues produces heightened problems and debauched behaviour which hamper social cohesion. Furthermore, the NDP (2012:338) clearly states, "Complex social problems require professional interventions to deal with the symptoms and underlying causes of social pressures, most evident in schools, workplaces and neighbourhoods that are plagued by gang warfare and households afflicted by violence, including the abuse of women and children". Closely linked, the Integrated Service Delivery Model (Department of Social Development, 2005:6) specifies that all services rendered under the auspices of the model should be defined in terms of

broad categories relating to the level of interventions including preventative services, early intervention services, and statutory, residential and alternative care and reconstruction, including aftercare.

According to Patel (2015:93), social pluralism, the fourth theme within the framework, is informed by a partnership model which incorporates efforts and collaboration between individuals, communities, civil society, sponsors, developmental agencies as well as the private and public sector. In the researcher's view, there is a great deal of value for South Africa to enter into strategic partnerships to address the developmental challenges we face, however there is a significant gap in terms of holistically driving the social pluralism agenda. This is because resources are allocated in silo with a singular and often profit-driven mindset overlooking the broader opportunity and 'end goal' of the developmental approach in mind.

The fifth and final theme considers the aspects of bridging the gap between micro and macro practice as alluded to above. Dependant on the practice environment, vulnerable communities, the workplace or South African society at large, the researcher holds the view that the general approach to social development appears to be applied in an isolating and limiting manner. This view is supported by Van Breda (2007:5), as he cautions that all too often 'we' fall into historic remedial models of practice which focus only on individuals, ignoring the larger and most critical systems that neglect and at times even abuse vulnerable persons, which he concludes is completely out of sync with DSW. This theme aims at addressing these habitual and standardised response to interventions and encourages a broader view and approach.

2.4 Implementation of the DSW in South Africa

Patel and Hochfeld (2013:691) share the following view: "South Africa is unique in that the developmental approach to social welfare and social work was adopted as national government policy in 1997 after the demise of apartheid". Zastrow (2000:15) describes the developmental approach as an approach that campaigns for social

interventions which contribute positively to economic development by integrating it with social development for the betterment and benefit of all members of society. He further adds that the developmental approach was used by the United Nations in its efforts in developing countries such as South Africa to promote the growth of social programmes, as the United Nations asserted that such programmes had the promise of improving the overall economies of such third world countries.

According to Patel and Hochfeld (2013:692), the welfare policy approach after apartheid needed to correct inequity and discrimination in the system and its almost exclusive focus by acknowledging preventive and development interventions.

The introduction and initial implementation of the DSW approach was not a seamless process. Lombard (2008:159) places emphases on the conceptual confusion around the developmental welfare approach, stating explicitly that the consequences cannot be under-estimated. She further adds that social service workers who made attempts to move their practice models in the direction of the DSW approach were further challenged to also integrate socio-economic interventions into their programmes during the same timeframe. Despite these challenges, the DSW approach materialised and presented a framework and guide in terms of implementing change.

A crucial element was bridging the dichotomy between micro social service interventions, aimed at individuals and families, and macro interventions to change the structures and institutions that cause social and economic injustice. Public provision of basic and social services is constrained by administrative inefficiencies and the poor quality of services caused by institutional and capacity problems.

Patel and Hochfeld (2013:693) also found that the economic, institutional, service delivery and social development challenges place enormous pressure on welfare services at the micro-level. In South Africa, these social welfare services are delivered largely by state-subsidised NGOs in collaborative partnership with government. They specifically target children, youth, women, older persons, and people with disabilities and chronic illnesses, among others. Aside from delivering traditional protection and therapeutic services, the DSW approach envisages interventions to support and grow local community initiatives through community

development, local economic development, income generation and micro-enterprises, among others, to promote the livelihood capabilities of the poor.

Van Breda and du Plessis (2009:126) describe the DSW approach as operating from the view that challenges faced by South Africans are viewed within their broader contexts and the structural social factors which impact on smaller systems and individuals. These views are levied from an occupational social work perspective, which at this point holds the strongest link to the EAP field but has nevertheless remained an entity and profession or area of specialisation on its own. Midgley (2013:11) offers an interpretation of the varying definitions of DSW which opens the door to the EAP field in stating, "In recent years, definitions of social development have emphasised the importance of social investment and the way they enhance the functioning of individuals, families and communities. Social investments are 'productivist' in that they generate returns not only to those who benefit from these investments but also to the economy and the wider society". Services rendered within the framework of the EAP qualify for exactly what has been described.

During the same timeframe, Kruger and Van Breda (2001) published an occupational social work practice model (OSWPM) for the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), in an attempt to guide SANDF social workers in functioning outside of the limited scope of micro practice; a model better suited for their specific work environment. Briefly, social work-specific literature seemingly refers to the field of occupational social work (OSW) as a specialised field of practice which aims at serving human needs of a working community through workplace and other interventions. According to Netting, Kettner and Memurity (1998:157), occupational social work involves assisting employees, their families and management with challenges that relate to the social functioning of human relationships in the workplace. The OSWPM model was based on four guiding principles. These principles were retrospectively critiqued as not being in alignment with the DSW approach adopted within the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997). Following several suggestions by various researchers stating that the OSWPM discussed above does not 'fit' with the DSW approach, Van Breda and du Plessis (2009) undertook a critique of the OSWPM from a DSW view. In concluding the critique, Van Breda and du Plessis (2009:332) offered the following recommendations, "A number of adjustments to the

OSWPM are required to be better aligned with the developmental approach to social welfare in South African. These do not require an abandonment of the model, but rather a series of adjustments, some of which are more a question of orientation than practice". The above findings illustrate very clearly some of the practical challenges faced within the social services field in terms of the implementation of the DSW whilst simultaneously providing insight into possible opportunities and benefits of the approach.

The abovementioned seeks to better align the social service practitioner with the goals and objectives of the developmental approach. In addition, an analysis of the day-to-day role of the OSW practitioner in correlation with the 'broad' definitions of DSW in South Africa illustrates that the social service practitioner's role and function within business (the workplace) today is not only essential, but assumes a natural shift towards the approach. In discussing the above implications of the DSW for OSW, Van Breda (2007:1) also pointed out however that the DSW appears to have overlooked employees (those currently formally employed) and interprets this as a shortcoming of the approach. In concluding the critique of the OSWPM, Van Breda and du Plessis (2009:32-333) recommended that the model should place greater emphasis on the importance of looking into rights within the workplace, considering the real economic and social impact of, for example, salary and the level of democracy and participation at work (the constant power dynamic within the workplace) in order to better align itself with the goals of DSW in achieving the goals advocated in the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997).

From the brief discussion above, it can be concluded that much progress has been made in terms of the introduction of the approach through the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997). However, as pointed out by Lombard (2008:154), most of the challenges experienced by social workers specifically remain in the implementation and integration.

2.5 Challenges faced by social service practitioners in implementing the DSW approach within the South African context

In order for practice models to be adapted, changed or enhanced to tie in with the guidelines set out within the approach, critical consideration of the key features and themes of the approach became critical. Ten years later, a review of the implementation of the White Paper for Social Welfare was undertaken which found that some progress had been made, however Lombard (2008:166) confirmed within her review of the implementation of the White Paper that although DSW can celebrate many achievements, the challenges remain in the effective implementation of its principles.

At the time of publishing the White Paper, the Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development acknowledged that the South African economy had not been effective in supplying adequate employment opportunities for all citizens. Unemployment at the time had increased the vulnerability of many individuals, family households and consequently communities. In addition, the South African social welfare system made very little provision for those with special needs, such as people who are differently abled or considered to be disabled (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997). As a result, many citizens were forced into turning to the social development and welfare systems in order to secure and sustain their livelihoods for income maintenance and social support. The ministry did however acknowledge that poverty itself cannot be measured by income alone, nor can an anti-poverty programme only address income-enhancing measures. To effectively address poverty necessitates a multi-sectorial and integrated approach.

Lombard (2008:127) investigated the impact of social transformation on the non-government welfare sector and the social work profession in South Africa and found that the Department of Social Development (2005c:11–12) reported on the far-reaching impact of the neglect of social services. This report found that there are inadequate numbers of social service practitioners to deal with the high work load and deepening poverty within South Africa, accompanied by a large number of

children awaiting trial in prison due to a shortage of probation workers and a lack of infrastructure, such as places of safety and secure community care facilities.

Moreover, an increase in social pathology and social ills such as domestic violence, substance abuse and HIV/AIDS had been highlighted. The inability of service providers in the non-government sector to render preventative or support service due to inadequate planning for these services and difficulties with fundraising have resulted in services being under threat.

The non-government, not-for-profit organisations within the landscape, who provide the bulk of social welfare services aimed at addressing social pathology and social problems, had rapidly begun to experience funding and sustainability issues as well (Gauteng Social Services Funding Crisis Committee, 2005). With this in mind, a clear need for alternative and more viable social service programmes became and remains evident.

Zastrow (2000:15) avowed that any social programme, irrespective of its disposition, which assists an individual in becoming and remaining employable contributes to the economic development of a society. In the researcher's view, the challenges noted above point in the direction of programmes actively seeking to promote employment and keep individuals employed, healthy and stable in order for them to make a valuable contribution to economic and social development. Although the core function, goals and objectives of EAPs are not directly concomitant with the notions described above, irrefutable and perhaps unintended consequence of EAP activity in a workplace may contribute positively to many of the problem areas identified within the social services and welfare field, particularly with regard to the DSW approach.

With the above findings in mind, the student holds the view that there may be opportunity for EAP practice to better align itself within the DSW approach, hence the rationale for this study.

2.6 Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) in South Africa

The Employee Assistance Professionals Association of South Africa (EAPA-SA) was established in 1996, where the immediate undertaking was set out to be the development of a standards document which aimed to provide a guideline to EAP practitioners for EAP Programmes (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:19). The first EAP standards document developed in 1999, which was later revised, provides guidelines which are categorised within the standards document under eight themes. The most relevant but not exclusive themes linked to this study include clinical, non-clinical and preventative services. These aspects have the potential to be closely aligned to the DSW approach in practice. The overarching purpose of EAPA-SA (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010) serves a number of functions including the following: to provide a benchmark for EAP practice, to map out the scope of practice, to promote high quality programmes, to guide EAP membership, to operationalise programme standards and to enhance the quality and functionality of programmes.

2.7 History of EAPs in South Africa

In earlier years, Bargal (1993:372-373) conducted a comparative analysis of first world countries' perspectives on the development of social work in the workplace. He postulated that occupational social work had re-emerged in the world of work as a direct result of the establishment of social services. This re-emergence came about due to a global workplace management need which required increased productivity, a reduction of employee problems, and a sense of social responsibility in the workplace to take responsibility for the well-being of their employees. Similarly, Smith and Gould (1993:11) add that in addition to EAPs, the development of social services within the workplace was characterised by a wide assortment of foci ranging from organisational development strategies to child care facilities and behavioural

risk/health management. In current day EAP practice, this emergence as noted by Smith and Gould (1993) has been dubbed employee health and wellness programmes, employee wellness programmes and work-life balance programmes, to mention but a few.

Historically, Smith and Gould (1993:13) pointed out that, “Occupational social work overlaps with the workplace practice of licensed counsellors, psychologists, chemical dependency specialist and others”. They further added, “The employee assistance model relies on a number of traditional social work roles including counsellor, mediator, advocate and broker, in addition to the occasional roles of teacher – trainer or ‘constructive confronter’”. Once again, the roles referred to here are very similar to those of an EAP practitioner as set out by EAPA International and EAPA-SA.

Smith and Gould (1993:17) professed that the changing demographics of the 21st century will exert profound effects on social policies and the dynamics of the world of work, as we in a South African context have seen.

EAP practitioners are presented with several opportunities to offer unique insights into policy formation, support strategies and cross-sectional collaborations in order to influence private sector and corporate work organisations to meet government’s need to implement and sustain a developmental approach to social welfare. The question however remains: do the drivers and decision-makers within these fields see opportunity and return on investment?

Ozawa, as cited in Bargal (1993:374) provided a conceptual framework which assumed that occupational social work in work organisations develops progressively through four discernible stages. These include the role to provide counselling services to employees and, at the highest stage, to serve as an organisational developer that works side by side with management and unions to create a system which produces high levels of work-life balance and high performance. The researcher holds the view that this conceptual framework is very similar to the current day core technologies and standards of EAPA standards committees globally which aim to standardise EAP core areas of practice.

Although not limited to the boundaries of a particular professional field of practice, all social service agents practising under the auspices of an EAP practitioner are

expected to utilise the standards guideline as a basis for their programme. Given South Africa's unique history and the rapid change the country has undergone in the last decade, the researcher has identified a possible point of entry to form a developmental collaboration between the South African social welfare system, social services and private sector work organisations.

Bargal (1993:381) states, "In essence, it is argued that the significant economic and organisational transformation taking place worldwide are resulting in severe stress for millions of workers and their families". In addition, she states it can be argued that preventative programmes can assist individuals to better handle situations or social programmes and thereby increase their likelihood of becoming active contributors to society.

2.8 EAP practice model

2.8.1 Overview of EAPs

Much like the occupational social work practice model (OSWPM) referred to above, EAPs function exclusively within the world of work with a few characteristic differences. Employee assistance programmes historically stem from occupational alcohol prevention programmes from as far back as 1935. Govender (2009:13) states the historical development of EAPs in South Africa has been convoluted in nature in that it has evolved from social welfare. More specifically, it has evolved into a combination of occupational social welfare, human capital management, mental health and occupation health and safety focus areas. Govender (2009:13) continues by stating that EAPs with different forms exist in different parts of South Africa, the form of which is dependent on the roles and grades of EAP practitioners in different workplaces. This insight is particularly interesting as internationally, the social welfare strategy that has proved most effective in improving economic and social well-being consists of three elements, namely: labour-absorbing growth, equitable investments in education and health care, and social support for the poor and

vulnerable groups (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997).

2.8.2 The variability of EAP services

Many people experience difficulties in managing social ills, life situations and life stage transitions, which in turn impact on their social functioning. Social welfare programmes designed and developed to promote optimal social functioning also contribute to human resource development and social stability (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997). Similarly, Jacobson and Attridge (2010:2) profess that in the modern world of work, most EAPs are considered “broad-brush” programmes, designed and developed to support a multitude of employee, family and workforce performance issues. Needless to say, the idea of a programme that is broad in nature may have the potential to yield specific results which are developmental in nature if designed and implemented appropriately.

2.8.3 Linking principles between the DSW approach and EAPs

In their review of a developmental programme by a South African NGO, Lombard et al. (2013:184) point out and support the notion that there are a number of dimensions or pillars that need to be addressed when forming a programme that is developmental in nature. These pillars, according to Lombard et al. (2013: 182-186) cover social and economic development, driving and empowering the rights of citizens and improving health and education, including empowerment programmes geared towards positive self-assertion and dignity. The researcher is of the view that herein lies a potential link not only for social service practitioners practicing in the field of social work for example, but also for EAPs operating in the world of work. The dimensions or pillars briefly mentioned above could possibly be linked to all standards as outlined in the EAPA-SA standards document (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010), which range from clinical services to networking, non-clinical services and marketing and promotion strategies, all of which have the potential to

be developmental in nature. Although the workplace has long been regarded as a community that is advantaged, the South African reality of employment and the knock-on effect of the poverty statistics in the country place a large portion of employed South Africans at risk as well. It is arguable that these individuals could be regarded as vulnerable due to the extent of the social, financial and emotional responsibilities towards their unemployed families and communities. Should the above notion be regarded as a valid viewpoint, EAPs must then be considered as programmes offering services which are developmental in nature.

2.8.4 Management of citizens in the workplace

Cekiso (2014:28) states the many work organisations view EAPs as an anchor for producing a workforce that is both healthy and highly performing, thus increasing a work organisation's global market positioning and enhancing the social functioning of its employees. Jacobson and Attridge (2010:20) further add that, "A unique set of EAP functions included programs and interventions related to benefits management. These include micro-linkages with counselling, treatment and other community resources and the creation and maintenance of macro-linkages between the work organization and counselling, treatment and other community resources. With the overlap from mental health and substance abuse into work-life issues, it makes sense that EAPs and work-life programs function collaboratively as both address various issues critical for helping employees reclaim and sustain a sense of work-life balance".

Since EAPs operate within workplaces, there is a definite opportunity, and responsibility placed on work organisations to focus on both the social and economic development of people formally employed.

Employee assistance programmes are able to achieve this by means of ensuring that employees and/or their family members who present with issues are educated, empowered and assisted. This in itself indicates that there is a strong need and business case for EAP services in the world of work, the benefits of which have the potential to impact employees at an individual, familial and community level.

Jacobson and Attridge (2010:12) explain, “EAPs help to form the foundation to support an employer’s most valuable asset – its employees”. Companies are now realising that the most important asset is their employees, therefore maintaining their physical health and mental well-being is crucial. Views by Jacobson and Attridge (2010) were also pointed out by du Plessis much earlier on in the introductory phases of the DSW (1999:19), when she stated: “There are two major contexts from which to analyse the development of occupational social work in South Africa. The first context refers to the ‘welfare systems’, whilst the second relates to the management of people at work”.

Furthermore, EAPs are in a unique position to assist employees in avoiding disciplinary measures which may lead to loss of income and dependence on the social welfare system by applying proactive tools and reactive interventions as soon as an issue is identified. This responsibility includes concepts such as encouraging democratic citizen participation and driving programmes that form developmental partnerships. In addition, EAPA-SA (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010) also differentiates between the types of services as alluded to within the Integrated Service Delivery Model (Department of Social Development, 2005). Although the employee and EAP relationship is largely based on a transactional relationship, the implications of such development provide for overlapping benefit to society at large, Rwomire ([Sa]: 4) supports the notion of economic and social development by stating that all nations require both social and economic resources in order to achieve their desired national development goals, and further adds that social work has the ability to intercede the process of development by means of enabling individuals and the larger society.

2.8.5 EAPs and the macro environment

A core component of EAPs, being the clinical element places a huge reliance on the ability of the EAP practitioner to refer the individual/group to the appropriate provider. Lombard et al. (2013:189) state, “The welfare sector cannot respond to every need but it can facilitate connections to services by creating awareness among the responsible authorities and facilities”. In the researcher’s view, the same can be

argued for all social services including EAPs. Jacobson and Attridge (2010:2) posit that tension between limited organisational resources available to employees and the increasing productivity demands of employers contributes to a variety of problems experienced by employees. These problems are further affected by efforts to balance work with a healthy and fulfilling personal and family life. Employee assistance programmes can play an important role in helping employees, as well as their family members, to balance the demands of work and personal life, while also supporting the employer's goals for improved and sustained levels of high workplace productivity.

2.9 Summary

From the literature above, it is evident that non-regulatory EAP guidelines exist. The fluidity that is present within the EAP field, which spans registration as an EAP practitioner to social welfare policy, calls for a solid research agenda to be developed in order to guide EAP practitioners in terms of their practice models, and henceforth aligning it as far as possible with the DSW and public welfare policy.

At the core of both the DSW approach and the principles underpinning EAPs are similar objectives, yet little to no research has been done in terms of EAP practice and the DSW approach. Dedicated research such as that of Van Breda and Kruger (2007), which aimed to link OSW and DSW exists. This is advantageous to the likes of the OSW population as debate and consideration has been documented and has influenced practice models. The researcher is of the view that there is potential for EAP practitioners and providers to align their strategies and programmes with the principles embedded in the DSW approach. The researcher seeks to understand how EAP practitioners view the approach and, in so doing, explore this apparent gap and provide recommendations for further research or considerations for practice within the EAP field.

2.10 The scope and limitations of EAPs in South Africa regarding the DSW approach

Employee assistance programmes often partner with other strategic sections in work organisations including work-life, human resources, management, occupational health and medical departments (Jacobson & Attridge, 2010:2). Employee assistance programmes play an important role in helping employees balance the demands of work and personal life whilst supporting the employer's goals for improved and sustained levels of high workplace productivity.

Chikadzi and Pretorius (2011:260) state the following in this regard, "There is a need to develop programmes that impact on socio-economic objectives and the structural origins of mass poverty and inequality. Without having a direct and observable impact on the structural roots of poverty, social work educators and social service practitioners are continuing to address symptoms and not the origins of poverty. Therefore a lack of developmental programmes that impact on the root causes of mass poverty and inequality mean that social services will remain on a poverty-management path which addresses and minimises the worst effects and claims transitory victories against poverty, but fails to contribute meaningfully to the eradication of poverty". In addition, Gray and Lombard (2008:10) are of the opinion that for each social service occupation, the challenge is to clearly demarcate core professional boundaries in order to strengthen one another's capacity to work in concert to achieve the goals of social development.

Many employees suffer from conflicts, and concerns such as substance abuse and other health issues for example, all of which interfere with their ability to carry out their work effectively. The nature of work itself can sometimes contribute to employee performance problems. In addition, societal changes and community problems (such as natural disasters, violence and economic distress) influence employee health and behaviour. Whether the problems stem from the individual employee, the workplace itself or greater society, many employers have turned to EAPs to help respond to these concerns. When it is implemented correctly, an EAP can provide great value to an organisation (EASNA, 2009:10).

Based on the above, the researcher therefore questions whether EAP practitioners are in a position to directly serve South African citizens who are exposed to social, economic and even political plights. Should services rendered to such individuals not be developmental in nature?

Smith and Gould (1993:18-19) contribute to the EAP discussion when exploring the concept of managed care. They state that managed care involves the development and implementation of benefit plans for mental health services, both to control costs and to provide adequate coverage. The challenge with tasks of this nature is directly linked to the rising costs of treatment for dysfunction, illness and substance abuse. As a result of these escalations, many insurers now exclude or limit coverage for issues such as mental illness or substance abuse. Such restrictions in turn create a reliance on state services. The continued coordination between managed care systems and existing EAPs is therefore vital to the success of these forms of support treatment strategies. Smith and Gould (1993:19) concluded their study by stating, "Both the social services profession and the world of work are confronted by complex dilemmas of values, ethics and paradoxical choices as a result of increased diversity, inconsistent or changing policies and more especially as public demand widens for economic and social responsiveness from both government and business".

A developmental programme should be designed to focus on micro and macro issues in order to empower and develop individuals, families and communities at large. The adoption of a developmental approach by any social service offering will positively contribute to such social and economic development, irrespective of the concepts and criteria that define and dictate which citizens have access to social welfare services. These concepts include, for example, the differences between the working class and vulnerable groups, which may by default deny inclusive and democratic participation.

2.11 Conclusion

Although a clear demarcation of roles between social services, occupational services and EAPs exists, as predetermined by the environment and source of funding, the

end beneficiary/beneficiaries remain/s the same: the South African citizen. It is for this reason that the researcher aims to understand the correlation, if any, between the DSW approach and EAP practice models.

Chapter 3

Empirical Investigation into the Perceptions of EAP Practitioners Regarding the Developmental Welfare Approach in Gauteng Province

3.1 Introduction

The Developmental Social Welfare (DSW) approach was adopted by the Department of Social Development in an attempt to strategically and practically improve the quality of social welfare and human dignity in South Africa. A great deal of commitment and effort has been made by government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector alike to achieve this overarching goal.

The Department of Social Development, on behalf of government recognised that adopting such an approach would not be feasible without the buy-in and active commitment and participation of civil society, NGOs and the private sector. Within the paper, the following statement sets out the stance: “In view of fiscal constraints, low economic growth rates, rising population growth rates and the need to reconstruct social life in South Africa, the Government cannot accept sole responsibility for redressing past imbalances and meeting basic physical, economic and psycho-social needs. The promotion of national social development is a collective responsibility and the co-operation of civil society will be promoted” (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997). As such, a continuous call for active engagement and support has echoed the White Paper from implementation date to current day.

Employee assistance programmes (EAPs), at the face of it, may not be an obvious link between business and government for many countries around the globe; however, the unique history and socio-political climate in South Africa has always required that all entities operating within the South African landscape contribute to the collective objectives of the country, including the private sector.

With global workplace trends evolving rapidly, many organisations quickly realised the need for corporate companies to support their human capital resources over and

above standard income agreements. Employee assistance programmes fulfilled that role and have evolved accordingly over time. Although EAPs are by no means a form of social welfare support structure, the guiding principles and possible impact of EAPs have an obvious impact on the country as a whole. As cited by Mogorosi (2009:344), employee assistance models can best be described as a form of workplace social work as these programmes promote health, disease prevention and are further characterised by many common elements including policies, procedures and services. He further states that the focus of these employee assistance services is on social welfare needs.

The purpose of this study therefore was to unpack and understand EAP practitioners' views and perceptions towards the DSW approach and to ascertain if any linkages, gaps and opportunities towards this common goal exist.

3.2 Research methodology

3.2.1 Goal

The goal of this study is to explore the perceptions of EAP practitioners regarding the developmental social welfare approach in Gauteng Province.

3.2.2 Research approach

The objective of this chapter is to present the findings by means of transcription, analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data collected.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher adopted a qualitative approach as the basis of the research is exploratory in nature, and aimed to thoroughly depict the views and perceptions of the study population. In selecting this approach, the researcher utilised semi-structured interviews supported by a digital recording device during each interview, along with field notes which were manually recorded during

and immediately after each interview. The researcher transcribed each interview within 24 hours of the interview. This process was followed by the collective coding of each interview, in which the researcher noted themes and trends.

3.2.3 Population, sample and sampling method

The research universe, referred to herein as participants, all possess the attributes of and working experience within the EAP industry. The research sample was comprised of EAP practitioners registered with EAPA-SA, or employed by a company registered with EAPA-SA and based in Gauteng Province.

The study population sets boundaries around the above-mentioned attributes, however it was not limited to a specific set of criteria in terms of professional or academic background. The researcher elected to utilise this approach as the EAP industry in South Africa has yet to be formally recognised and regulated as a profession on its own. As mentioned in earlier chapters, this open-ended aspect has paved the way for a plethora of individuals entering into the EAP industry, some of whom have no theoretical and/or academic knowledge or qualifications linked directly to EAP. The sample of the study therefore is representative of individuals with social work, business, psychology and human resource knowledge and experience, all of whom are currently employed in the EAP industry.

The intended size of the research sample was between 15 and 20 EAP practitioners. The researcher approached the study by first obtaining permission from the board members of EAPA-SA to invite their Gauteng members to participate in the study. The researcher then obtained the Gauteng membership list and commenced by attempting to host a pilot study. The purpose of the pilot study was to test the data collection method and tools employed by the researcher and to refine any areas of concern or requiring clarity before commencing with the full study.

The researcher experienced several challenges during this phase of the research, including some logistical challenges in obtaining the correct membership list from the EAPA-SA board. Despite those challenges, the researcher attempted to complete the pilot study by inviting a selection of members to participate via means of email

communication, which was followed by a friendly reminder email two weeks later. A total of six pilot study requests were made. Since no telephonic contact details were provided by EAPA-SA, no telephonic follow-ups were done. To the dismay of the researcher, no positive response was received. As such, the researcher was not afforded the opportunity to complete a pilot study.

Since the researcher had elected to utilise purposive sampling for this study, the researcher commenced with the study by sending out a total of 125 email requests to EAPA-SA Gauteng members inviting them to partake in the study. A total of five practitioners on the EAPA-SA Gauteng database list declined to participate, stating that they were not based in the Gauteng area. A further 122 practitioners failed to respond to the initial request. The researcher proceeded by resending a second participation request to a total of 125 practitioners along with an email reminder.

Due to the low uptake, the researcher undertook to investigate the accuracy of the EAPA-SA Gauteng chapter listing. The EAPA-SA administration team resubmitted a reviewed and updated listing which reflected a total of 24 members. The researcher sent out requests for participation to this population from which a total of eight members responded positively. The majority of email requests were not successfully delivered. Based on the researcher's mail marshal system, the majority of the email addresses used either do not or no longer exist.

Moreover, while several willing candidates had agreed in principle to partake in the study, upon the researcher requesting commitment to dates, times and venues most of the potential participants failed to confirm. The study therefore commenced with a total of seven research participants.

Given the challenges described above, the researchers opted to compile a summary of events, which was subsequently discussed with the research supervisor. The appointed research supervisor provided the researcher with several recommendations and endorsed and invited the EAPA-SA Gauteng board and its members to partake in the study, but this too did not yield positive results

3.2.4 Data collection

Mohajan (2018:23) states that qualitative research studies must involve an explicit, disciplined and systematic approach to find out most appropriate results. The same logic which is applied to qualitative data collection processes.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher utilised one on one interviews as the primary data collection method. This approach was supported by the incorporation of a number of key data collection tools. The researcher developed a semi structured interview questionnaire to aid the one on one interview sessions held. As Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2008:291) point out, semi-structured interviews consist of several questions that help to define the areas of exploration and allows the interviewer or interviewee to deviate in order to pursue an idea or response in greater detail. The researcher further employed supplementary tools such as field notes, digital recordings of each session and where necessary the use of ad-hoc probing questions within the interview environment.

3.2.5 Data analysis

De Vos (2005:333) describes data analysis as the process of bringing meaning to and finding relationships between an accumulated set of data collected by the researcher.

In this study, the researcher focused on each interview question as well as field notes taken during the interviews in a similar fashion across all participants. By employing a colour coding methodology, the researcher identified either similarities or differences in perceptions and participant motivation and/or behaviour.

The analysis yielded findings which will be presented below in the following format:

Section 1: A biographical depiction of the research population.

Section 2: A tabulated outline and discussion on all identified themes and sub-themes which emerged from the data analysis.

3.3 Empirical findings

3.3.1 Section 1: Biographical depiction of population

The biographical profile of the research population was made up of the following variables: professional qualification, EAPA-SA classification, tenure in EAP field and job sector. The figures below illustrate the demographic split represented within this study.

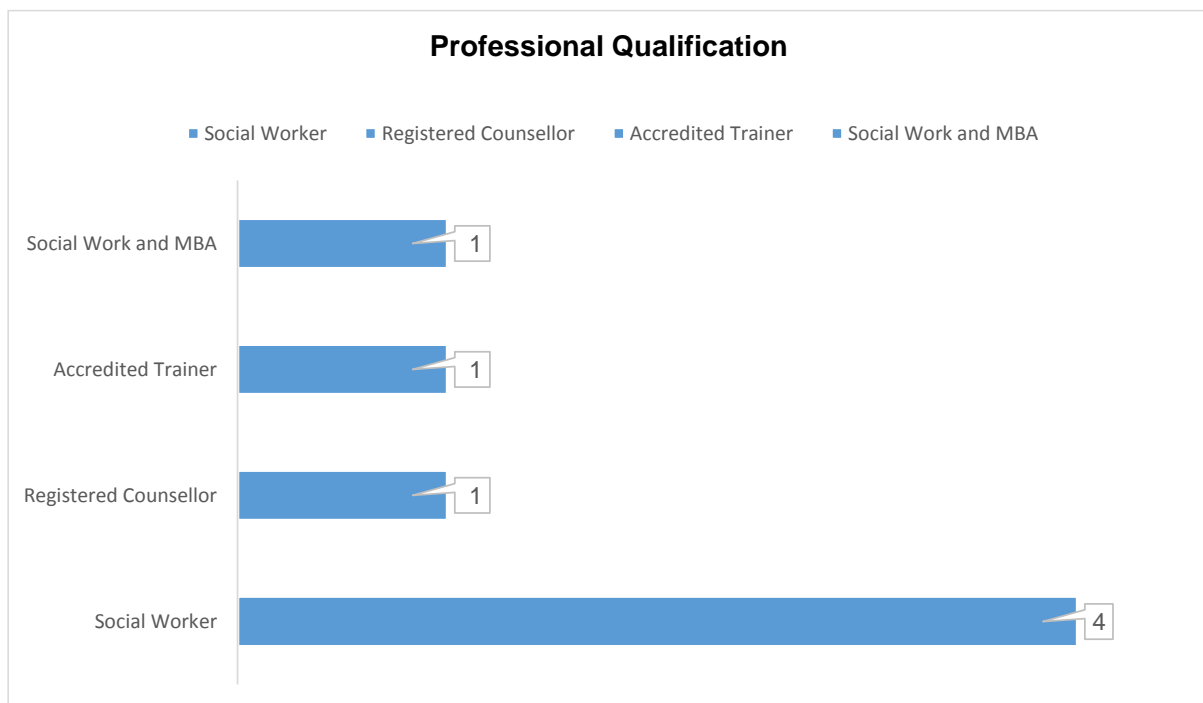


Figure 1: Professional qualification

Figure 1 provides a visual understanding of the professional segmentation of the participants in terms of qualification.

The White Paper for Social Welfare states, "Social workers are employed in commerce and industry and are involved in the delivery of social services to

employees and their families. These services are part of other services offered in the workplace such as employee assistance programmes and medical services” (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997).

The majority of participants in this study were social workers by profession. Furthermore, the researcher noted that the majority of these participants possess a combination of social science qualifications and some or other business/management qualification.

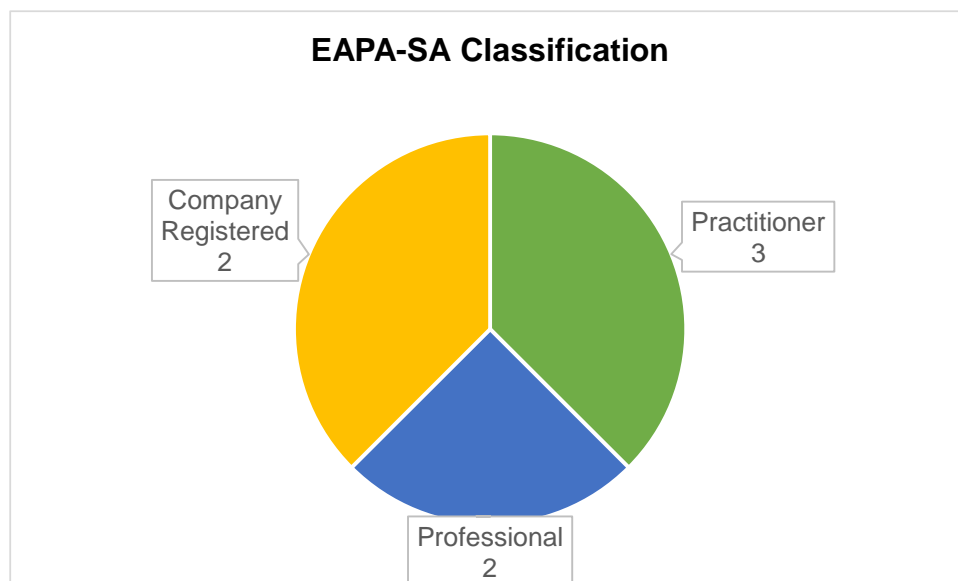


Figure 2: EAPA SA classification

EAPA-SA as an entity draws a distinction between the types of membership awarded to each individual. This distinction is based on a standardised set of criteria as quoted below:

“All EAP staff are ‘practitioners’, although only those with proof of statutory registration may be referred to as ‘professionals’. This means that all professionals are practitioners, but not all practitioners are professionals” (EAPA-SA, 2010). The majority of participants in this study are classified, based on their personal understanding, as EAP practitioners. A significant number of participants formed part of the reserved pool of participants who are not individually registered EAPA-SA members, but rather are employed by organisations registered with EAPA-SA. This

split presents a concern from the onset as one would presume that a vast majority if not all EAP practitioners would have a desire and need to be affiliated with the overarching body of their industry. The researcher did not explore the reasons or views of participants regarding this matter, as it would have been irrelevant to the goal of this study.

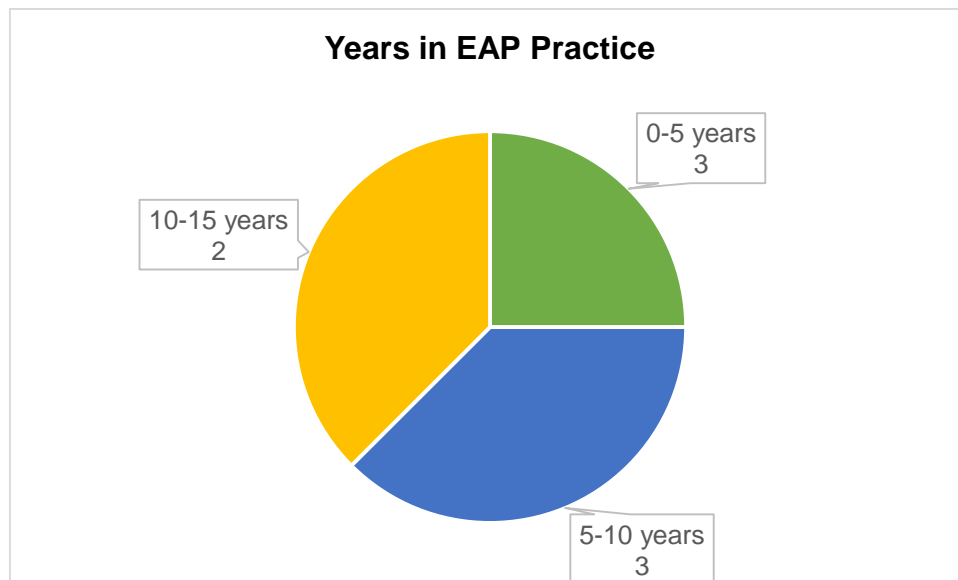


Figure 3: Years in EAP practice

Figure 3 provides insight into the individual and collective years of EAP practice of the participants. It is interesting to note that the majority of EAP practitioners have been in practice for a period exceeding 10 years. Given this data, the researcher felt confident in drawing on a collective body of knowledge driven by a combination of socio-political awareness, academic knowledge and quantifiable workplace experience. The findings hereof are discussed below.

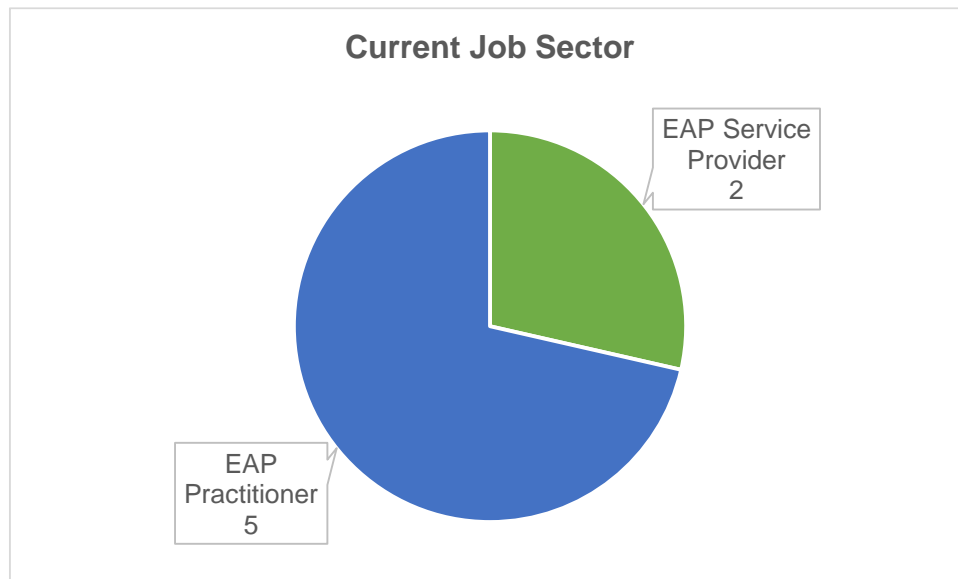


Figure 4: Current job sector

Figure 4 provides an indication of the type of EAP practice the participants are currently utilising. The White Paper (1997) broadly refers to industry-related service providers in the social welfare sector and goes on to explain that the industry is comprised of a multiplicity of individuals including but not limited to social workers, social auxiliary workers, social development workers and community development workers. The paper further adds that these service providers include the government, the formal welfare sector, religious organisations, NGOs and the informal welfare sector, including those formally employed by the business sector.

The researcher noted that the majority of participants were EAP practitioners formally employed by government organisations or corporates. It is however noteworthy to stress that a significant number of participants were employed by EAP service providers as company representative's verses being mandated to develop, implement and maintain an EAP.

3.3.2 Qualitative information according to themes and sub-themes

The table below provides an overview of the emerging themes and sub-themes found within this study. Since the data collection method employed a semi-structured interview schedule, not every question led to an emerging theme as much of the content overlapped or interlinked. Greeff (2011:351) confirms the researcher's experience in stating that the semi-structured interview is usually employed to acquire detailed insights on a particular topic, and further points out that this method allows for flexibility as opposed to employing a rigid and highly-structured approach.

Each theme and sub-theme below will be represented in the form of a summary of the researcher's findings validated by direct quotations from the interview transcripts to corroborate findings and literature.

Table 3.4 Summary of themes and sub-themes

Number	Theme	Sub-Theme
1	Conceptual understanding of the DSW	1.1 Professional affiliation and tenure as a driver for differing views
2	Conceptual confusion surrounding the approach	
3	Perceptions of the approach	Not applicable
4	Experience with the approach	
5	Links between the DSW and EAP Design	5.1 A complete disconnect
6	Key DSW Themes	6.1 Preventative services 6.2 Clinical services 6.3 Socio-economic development 6.4 The macro-micro divide 6.5 Social pluralism and active citizenship
7	DSW as an informer for EAP strategies	Not applicable
8	Are the key DSW themes represented within EAP practice?	Not applicable
9	DSW benefits for EAP practice	Not applicable
10	EAPs and social welfare policies and approaches	Not applicable

Within this study, the researcher set out to first understand what base understanding existed among the research participants before exploring and unpacking the key themes embodied within the approach.

Theme 1: Conceptual understanding of the DSW

The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) summarised the DSW approach as follows: "Welfare services should promote the development and social well-being of individuals, families, groups and communities. They should include a wide range of role players from both Government and civil society". Lombard and Kleijn (2006:213) share this view, "The adoption of a developmental approach to social welfare in South Africa in 1997 earmarked a commitment by the South African government and the social welfare sector to transform social welfare services within the context of the broader transformation agenda of South African society". Gray (2006:S53) however takes an alternate approach to defining the concept, in describing DSW as a name given to South Africa's 'new' welfare system which had been sculpted by social development theory.

Participants C, F and G demonstrated their understating of the approach in stating the following:

- *Participant C: "Developmental social welfare is a body that is designed to assist individuals, families and communities to deal with social problems and the ever-changing conditions in one's life."*
- *Participant F stated very accurately: "It means that services should be rendered from a developmental perspective. This includes more than just social upliftment; it includes the uplifting of an individual as a whole, economic, social, education, health and more."*
- *Participant G shared: "It is about a social well-being of a human being in a family, community and society at large. It looks at the individual holistically in terms of the problem that a person might be going through. It's is about empowering a person in an environment and identifying the relevant resources. It also encourages economic development in terms of income-generating projects and food security especially in disadvantaged communities."*

Discussion of Data

Participant feedback within this theme varied through the slightest omission of a few key concepts which embody the DSW approach, however these participants, although the minority within this study, demonstrated a broad understanding of the model.

Theme 2: Lack of understanding

According to the researcher, a lack of insight into the DSW approach demonstrates a possible lack of synergy, influence and knowledge between socio-political policy and corporate interest within this population. An overwhelming majority had little to no initial understanding of the approach.

The following inserts are extracts from participant transcripts which indicated a lack of understanding. These views provide greater insights into the collective positioning within this study:

- *Participant A: "I do not have an understanding of the development social welfare approach. As I said, towards my latter years I took on more of a business direction. From a social work perspective, I do not keep up with the trends."*
- *Participant B: "The first time I heard about it was when I received your request and your consent form. Even then I struggled a bit to understand it to be honest."*
- *Participant D asks for affirmation in a speculator fashion: "Ok, so I just want to confirm, is DSW looking at community development and corporate social responsibility for community development?"*

- *Participant E responded candidly: “I don’t know. I don’t think I’ve ever thought about it or had reason to think about it. So, I’m not entirely sure. I guess if I gave it a little bit of thought I’d probably have an answer for you but no.”*

Discussion of Data

The majority of participants indicated that they had no knowledge or understanding of the DSW approach. As a key approach to social welfare in South Africa, the researcher gained an immediate sense of the varying views and opinions amongst this population. Furthermore, the researcher recalls a key message presented within the Integrated Social Service Development Model (Department of Social Development, 2006a:2), where the then minister stated that during the decade past, there had been much debate, misinterpretation and misunderstanding around the focal points on which the DSW had been built. This was further confirmed by Lombard (2008:158) when she remarked on her 10-year post-implementation review and stated the following, “The White Paper for Social Welfare did not elucidate concepts clearly enough. It omitted to define concepts like ‘developmental social services’ and ‘developmental social work’. This has caused confusion, especially with regard to the links between traditional social work and social welfare, and developmental social work and social services”.

Sub-Theme 1.1: Professional affiliation and tenure as a potential driver for differing views

During the interviews, the researcher noted a few peculiar emerging sub-themes not linked to a specific question within the interview schedule. Those participants who had entered the EAP field of work within a one- to five-year tenure span appeared to have been in the minority, however they indicated a clearer view and understanding of the DSW approach. On the opposite scale, participants with longer tenure (five to

ten years plus) had absolutely no idea what the approach was about or what it represented.

Analogously, similar findings could be drawn based on the participants' professional affiliation. Again, the focal point of this particular study was not to investigate such difference, though it is noteworthy that some respondents, mainly those with lower EAP tenure/experience but who possessed a social work background, were able to explain and define the approach, albeit sometimes only loosely, according to their own understanding.

Participants who presented with psychology-based academic backgrounds, however provided very different views, with the majority stating they had no knowledge or understanding of the approach and battled, even upon probing, to piece together a solid point of view until much later in the interviews.

Discussion of Data

The above themes with their accompanying extracts provide a clear indication that there is very limited cohesive knowledge and understanding of the DSW approach among the EAP practitioners interviewed. In prior years, occupational social workers employed by SANDF had attempted to actively induce debate and discussion within the social work field around this perceived lack of understanding, but appeared to have fallen short of finding a lasting outcome. In echoing this, Dlangamandla (2010:91) undertook a South African study to explore the experiences of social workers in Gauteng regarding the implementation of the DSW. In this study, Dlangamandla postulates that practitioners who are engrossed in a conventional method of individualising clients and residual service delivery might understand a few concepts of the DSW approach superficially, yet appear to fail at understanding the role of practitioners when needing to apply a developmental approach in practice. He concludes his view by stating, "This emphasises the fact that reorientation of practitioners in the field is an essential tool to keep them updated and to prepare them emotionally for a paradigm shift". The researcher noted that

even the most seasoned EAP practitioners appeared uncomfortable at addressing or thinking about a possible link between the DSW and EAPs.

The difference in overall understanding on the DSW approach adopted by South Africa over 15 years ago is somewhat ominous. Given the demographic data set of this study, it would have been presumed that more participants would have a general understanding of the framework. It is arguable that those within the academic field of social work and/or with social development backgrounds would have a degree of knowledge; however, based on this sample, this presumption has been disproven. The above-mentioned views meticulously tie into Lombard's (2008:154) view that the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) did not clearly set out and reveal the ideologies in a manner which is clearly understandable.

Theme 3: Perceptions regarding the concept of Developmental Social Welfare

The third theme demonstrates the perceptions of EAP practitioners regarding DSW as a concept. Cambridge Online Dictionary (2017) defines perceptions as, "a belief or opinion, often held by many people and based on how things seem". It is regarded as a countable noun and explains the way that one thinks about something or the impression one has of it. When participants were probed to describe their perceptions, the following views were shared:

- *Participant A states unequivocally: "So for me, there is a disconnect in my mind." (Alluding to the idea that no perception is held.) "When you talk social development and when I practice social work, that usually had connotations of longer-term practice, so for me, being an EAP practitioner, [and from a] problem solving, Eagan model practice perspective, it's almost a transactional analysis as the workplace is not looking at creating dependency on a service, it's rather looking at empowering staff to develop skills to deal with whatever they need to deal with so that there is productivity."*
- *Participant B simply stated: "So I don't think I hold any perceptions because I don't understand what it is."*
- *Participant D shares: "The biggest one is that the EAP is for profit to some extent, but it still offers support to those that might not necessarily have*

received support previously by being funded by a sponsor. In the case of EWP the sponsor would be the organisation where they work, whereas in social or community development or DSW it would be donors.”

- *Similarly, Participant E responded by sharing the following: “No. I think, I don’t actually know; I’ve never thought of EAP or EWP in that context.”*
- *Participants G shares: “It looks at the individual holistically. It promotes proactive and reactive programmes including prevention awareness and early identification of the problem of an individual.”*

Lastly, one participant alludes elusively to some of the well-documented and discussed issues relating to the approach in stating the following:

- *Participant D: “The intentions are good yet implementations are slow if not happening and it is also dependent on the political and economic status of the country.”*

Discussion of Data

For the researcher, it was essential to understand how these EAP practitioners perceived the DSW concept in order to later grasp a full understanding of their experiences with the approach and to yield conclusive recommendations around the approach in its entirety. Not all participants provided an account of their perceptions; however, with the sample who did, it is once again evident that there is little to no consistency and arguably a cause for concern from a social welfare perspective, in that such confusion and obliviousness remain so sharply presented. As strongly indicated by one of the participants, the perception may even exist that social welfare services, even though now embodying a developmental approach, may be encouraging dependency on the system. Such findings could be indicative of a truly separated world of work which appears to exist between social welfare practitioners in the ‘field’ versus social welfare practitioners in the work environment.

Theme 4: Experience with the approach

The DSW approach has been in place within the South African context for 20 years. During a 10-year post-implementation review, Lombard (2008:166) aptly stated, “Although developmental social welfare can celebrate many achievements, the challenges to effectively implementing the White Paper for Social Welfare are ongoing. Areas of tardy progress in implementing the White Paper include delivery on its international, regional and national mandate to address the structural causes of poverty and inequality and the lack of a unified human resource strategy for social welfare”. With this in mind, the researcher set out to unpack EAP practitioners’ experiences with regard to the approach.

- *Participant B, having stated that there are no views held due to lack of knowledge and understanding opted to not contribute.*
- *Participant C stated: “My experience regarding the above concept is that the intentions are good yet the implementation is slow if not happening. It is also dependant on the political and economic status of the country.”*
- *Participant D shared the following perspective, while still holding the view that DSW is a driver for CSI: “There is a link, from my experience there is a donor/funder, a mediator.”*
- *Participant E states: “No. I think, I don’t actually know. I’ve never thought of EAP or EWP in that context. I think for me it’s (EAP) more of a company wanting to take care of their employees as well as make sure that the employees are being as productive as possible and performing optimally. I’ve never thought of it in that light so maybe that’s why.”*
- *Participant F: “Even though I know what developmental social welfare is, it isn’t always practiced in my workplace. The EAP services [are] rendered more on casework and are only used when needed for management purposes.”*

Discussion of Data

Based on the above insights, the researcher was left perplexed at the inconsistency and varying views or experiences of the participants. In reverting back to literature by Patel and Hochfeld (2013) and others, which suggested that whilst there had been challenges with the initial implementation of the approach, great progress had been made towards achieving the end goal, the researcher was unable to find solid evidence of this at this stage of the study. It is however important to note that Patel and Hochfeld (2013:700) had also imparted that whilst South Africa can be commended for an ambitious and progressive developmental welfare policy, barriers to implementing the approach resulted in a fragmented and often contradictory basket of service delivery. This may still be the case, 20 years later.

Theme 5: Linkages between the developmental social welfare approach and the way in which EAP core technologies and services are designed

During the literature study of this paper, the researcher noted what appeared to be possible links between the DSW approach and some of the fundamental EAP core technologies and services as endorsed by EAPA-SA. Due to the lack of research linking EAP practitioners to DSW or social welfare, the researcher set out to understand whether a possible synergy may exist and to ascertain the views and perceptions of the research participants.

- *Participant A: "I think they both aim to empower, I just think that the methods and ways to achieve that would differ."*
- *Participant C: "Yes, both bodies are aimed at improving one's life for the better."*
- *Participant D: "One is for profit and the other not. There is massive opportunity but too little investment and authentic interest."*
- *Participant E: "I believe there are connections yes."*
- *Participant F: "Yes and No."*

When probed to motivate their views, the following statements were provided:

- *Participant A: “I just think that the methods and ways to achieve that would differ. It really is just the manner in which they are designed that differs.”*
- *Participant C: “EAP is focused on assisting employees with challenges, some originating from family, communities and/or society.”*
- *Participant E: “The core technologies refer to networking and consultation. These are captured in the view of developmental social welfare which refers loosely to terms like participation, collaboration and empowerment. In working with the employee in resolving issues, developmental social welfare is accomplished.”*
- *Participant G shared: “The approaches are almost the same since the motive behind everything is to help a person cope and be able to live a normal life. These approaches are applicable in developmental social welfare and EAP.”*

Discussion of Data

Despite the earlier inconsistency in views and experiences shared by the participants, it was surprising to note that once the EAP core technology component had been introduced during the interview, the researcher easily noted a common thread in that the vast majority of participants agreed there are definite linkages. At the face of it, it appears as if the majority of EAP practitioners who partook in the study began to realise that there are similar underlying key principles which underlie both the DSW approach and EAP core technologies and the way in which they are designed. It is comforting to note that the lack of conceptual understanding may not be deeply reflected in the services offered to the individual, community or society at large due to professional demarcations. As noted, the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) acknowledges that the world of work, in which EAPs predominantly operate, makes an active contribution to the achievement of the paper’s end goal. The paper states verbatim, “Occupational social welfare and other social service programmes are provided by various businesses for their employees and their families. Business and corporate social investment programmes also fund social welfare and social development programmes in local communities and nationally.

They contribute to capacity building for welfare and development programmes through training in management, administration, finance and budgeting”.

Sub-theme 5.1 – A complete disconnect

With the above-mentioned lack of research in terms of the DSW and EAP, along with the views and motivations provided in Theme 3.1 in mind, the researcher noted that some participants, although in the minority, held very strong opposing views.

- *Participant B strongly maintains: “No. So for me when I initially looked at it, I thought that maybe it (DSW) was a new therapeutic model or social work or counselling model or the way in which you should be providing support to individuals, not necessarily employees. Also, if you are thinking social welfare, I’m thinking more along the lines of grant systems and support; that type of thing. I don’t really see a link in terms of organisations or EAPs or even practitioners such as myself.”*
- *Participant D states: “The one is uh, the difference would be that the EWP is for profit to some extent but it’s still offering the same service, whereas they are still offering support to those who might not have had access.”*

As indicated in prior sections, the researcher noted that a very subtle trend started to emerge. Participant A had originally stated that there was a definite link between the DSW and EAP core technologies and services. In recollection, she then added the following:

- *“The practitioners working towards that (DSW) obviously have the clients’ need at heart and I think that would be a dilemma at times in terms of practicing, because at times a client may need to work slower but then you’re sitting with six sessions within which to work. Also, with the EAP core technology, it is based on clinical practice but the employer funds the*

programme, which makes the disconnect very apparent: meeting the clients' need vs the funds to do this."

- *Participant G similarly shares: "The major difference is that EAP's aim is to increase productivity in the workplace, whereas the developmental social welfare approach is to empower an individual to be self-sufficient."*

Discussion of Data

At this stage of the research study, the researcher once again faced a juncture which posed the question: Could the academic background and tenure in the field of EAP have some sort of influence in shaping the views and experiences of these practitioners? These factors are not the focal point of this study but are nevertheless important to note, as this knowledge and associated attitude and perception have the potential to influence practice outcomes.

Even so, the argument stating that there is a distinct disconnect illustrates the influence of the world of work. For the researcher, it is obvious to note that the participants who align themselves with this position view the EAP service as an exclusive service to the workplace which intends on driving productivity, and do not see the programme as having an empowering influence over broader society, seemingly due to the programme being funded privately (by work organisations) as opposed to being positioned and sponsored by government as an empowerment tool.

Theme 6: The five key themes as outlined in the DSW

The DSW approach is supported by five key themes. Lombard (2008:167) explains that in her view the implementation of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) is an established approach that is rights-based and acknowledges the rights of vulnerable and/or poor persons to security as well as social and economic development. Zastrow (2010:03) broadly defines the term as meaning a nation's

system of programmes, benefits and services which help people meet those social, economic, educational and health needs that are fundamental to the maintenance of society. It is not only for meeting needs though, but is also about the management of social problems or conditions and the maximisation of opportunities.

The ensuing sub-themes covered in the study aimed to probe each of the five themes, as postulated by Patel (2015), to understand and unpack whether any of them have any relevance in the EAP field and to ascertain if EAP practice could make any meaningful contributions to the end goals of the DSW approach.

Sub-theme 6.1: Preventative services

The White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997:7) posits the approach to service delivery in South Africa was based largely on rehabilitative services which required institutional care and was not rooted in preventative and developmental foundations. The paper further added that part of the focus of the new national goals would be to facilitate the provision of appropriate DSW services to all citizens. These were identified as services which needed to include rehabilitative, preventative, developmental and protective components. Comparatively, the researcher noted that EAPA-SA's Standards Committee document called for a very similar focus on preventive services. A common thread throughout the EAPA-SA (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:16) document is the need for crisis interventions, trauma services and training initiatives to all possess an element of preventative services affixed. More importantly, the standards document dedicates an entire standard to preventative services, citing that all EAP services will develop holistic, proactive interventions in order to ensure that all EAP programmes are developed in a manner which would allay behavioural and organisational risks. This approach, according to EAPA-SA (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010) would assist in building individual competencies, focus on clinical and non-clinical services, and would ultimately lead to the overall enhancement of optimal wellness of all systems impacted by the EAP.

In the participants' views, the following discernments were made:

- *Participant A: “Well if you look at the standards and going back to the core technologies, there is a standard on prevention. I don’t think that many practitioners follow through on that standard. There is a synergy in terms of that; whether it is practiced adequately is questionable...”*
- *Participant B: “Yes there is definitely a sense of empowerment, even when you do your short counselling, you’re giving them skills so that if they go through it again in the future they are able to deal with it... All of that is empowering, education, awareness, from my perspective which can then be shared.”*
- *Participant C: “Yes, I am of the opinion that enhancing preventative services will benefit EAPs. If people are well informed and knowledgeable, often it minimise the risks that one will find himself or herself in or even minimise social challenges that trigger some of the unacceptable behaviours.”*
- *Participant F: “Yes. Preventative services can be very effective in addressing problems before they manifest into employee problem behaviour. Prevention is better than cure.”*
- *Participant G adds: “Yes, enhancing preventative services promotes awareness where an individual is highly informed and can make informed decisions in life.”*

In a dissimilar manner, two participants highlighted important views in stating that whilst there is definitely a link and correlation between EAP preventative services and the DSW approaches call for services to be developmental and not solely reactive in nature, there are certain aspects of an EAP that introduce some complexities, as highlighted in the extracts below.

- *Participant D: “It is very difficult because EAP itself and the affiliates, the resources we use is a very reactive service so there would have to be a change in framework in the services we provide and how we provide those services. Ideally that you won’t go to the doctor if you’re not feeling sick.”*
- *Participant E adds: “I think the difficulty comes in where EAP’s focus is around the confidentiality aspect and because of that people are given a choice or options in terms of wanting to use it or access the services.”*

Discussion of Data

Interestingly, the researcher noted that in prior questions probing possible linkages between the DSW approach and EAP, the majority of participants indicated unequivocally that they did not see any linkages. However, upon beginning to unpack the five themes individually by way of questions, the participants appeared to hold inherently different views.

In relation to preventative services, it is alarming that only one of the participants referred to the EAPA-SA (2010) standard on preventative services. Despite this, the majority of participants collectively held the view that EAPs only stand to benefit from adopting a more preventative approach in practice. This is further confirmed and illustrated as the remaining four key themes are unpacked and discussed.

Sub-theme 6.2: Clinical services

In unison with the previous sub-theme, EAPA-SA (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010) clearly stipulates the need and importance of clinical services. The broader standard entails trauma services, referrals, case management, aftercare or reintegration services, short-term interventions and assessments. The provocation for this standard stems from what EAPA-SA (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:11) states in this regard, "Timeously defusing and debriefing may lessen or prevent long-term difficulties or dysfunction at both the individual and organisational levels". In probing whether or not EAP clinical services should be adapted to be more developmentally suited as per the DSW approach guidelines, the participants shared the following views:

- *Participant A: "I can't see how one can practice without doing both. That is the difference between clinical practices vs EAP."*

- *Participant B: “Yes – to a certain extent for the individual I think because its short-term solution focused, you’re helping them think in a specific way. So from that perspective on an individual basis you’re empowering them. To a certain degree they could share some of that knowledge and insight with people they are close to or in their communities. So you need to keep the clinical integrity as well as the organisational developmental aspect of it or organisational risk. You can’t say you practice EAP without having both. There is always a dual approach.”*
- *Participant D: “We are in Africa and the clinical approaches are generally westernised. So from an academic perspective there is an immediate argument that there needs to be an ‘Africology’ type of approach. So this model wouldn’t be a traditional clinical model. They would have to be more acid based, client centred and culturally appropriate.”*
- *Participant E states: “I definitely think so. I think sometime with the clinical aspects it can be a bit more narrow minded or sometimes we get to situations where people will say you know we need to look out of the box a bit.”*
- *Participant F: “In my opinion clinical services are already developmentally focused. Clients are invited into a joint effort to solve their problems. To my knowledge the problem is that too much focus is placed on clinical services instead of other functions (community work).”*

In support hereof, Participant G states: “Yes, since it is a developmental social welfare approach used in the social work context. It will teach employees to be self-sufficient and independent. It is all about social change of an individual in the community.”

Some offered divergent views, such as:

- *Participant C: “No, clinical EAP services should not be adapted to lean towards a development approach, but rather be left to address issues as they come but still work within the framework of the law and ethics.”*

Discussion of Data

Most frequently appearing from the participant extracts were the notions that employing developmental clinical services in practice is imperative, if not already an automatically assumed stance.

In his arguments set forth regarding the implications of the DSW on occupational social work, Van Breda (2007:1) argued that many occupational social workers are employed as employee assistance practitioners or in employee wellness services, which may be focused largely on individual therapy and are not involved in preventive, developmental or group-based interventions. The majority of participants within this study, however appear to be in agreement that EAP services are in fact developmental by their very nature. The most common examples provided by participants are preventative services, as well as clinical services which lean towards preventive services offered by EAPs. Exemplars included discussions around life management services such as financial management services, which are common components that complement the clinical aspect of EAP programmes in South Africa. The consensus appears to be that employees who are exposed to such services do support developmental clinical (and preventative) approaches.

Sub-theme 6.3: Socio-economic development

According to Gray (1997:4), from a social development perspective, socio-economic development was designed to address the phenomenon of poverty. In order to do so, Gray hypothesises that social policy needs to invest in people and human capital and must be unswervingly linked to economic development measures.

This also aligns with the explanation provided by the International Save The Children Alliance (2003), which shared that from a DSW policy perspective, statutory services are not only a micro-level statutory intervention, but are also linked to a macro-level, focusing on how socio-economic problems, globalisation, poverty, migration, HIV/AIDS, crime, disability, family difficulties and armed conflict affect the ability of families to raise children (International Save the Children Alliance, 2003:1). In

unison, Lombard and Kleijn (2006:222) stated that rehabilitative services are needed to develop empowerment programmes that would ultimately build capacity and develop income-generating skills which would allow South Africa to address socio-economic problems including poverty. When probed regarding the EAP's level of involvement around this DSW imperative, the respondents shared:

- *Participant A: "I think we are doing this already. If you think about how service providers in these settings (EAPs) operate, the company will pay for the employees but then the provider includes the dependants because we see the person in [their] environment...those people have access to services they would never have had access to ordinarily. So in an indirect way, companies are funding the broader community as such... So there is a developmental and economic component and aspect."*
- *Participant C: "It is clear to employers that unhealthy employees will be less productive and as a result of that will impact negatively on business, which in return impacts negatively on the economy of the country. If one is dismissed from work due to poor performance and/or absenteeism that increases unemployment in the country and might have a negative impact on the employee's family. However, if through EAPs we support that employee and his/her family that can go a long way."*
- *Participant D: "My contribution is that the framework is there, resources are already there."*
- *Participant F: "EAPs can contribute by assisting the employee to enhance his financial literacy. An example of this would be to consult with an expert who can assist employees in making more financially smart decisions. Furthermore, economic development can include skills development, educational training, in-job training, all of which has the potential to further develop the employee which contributes to his economic development."*
- *Lastly, Participant G adds: "Yes, an individual is strength based by knowing what resources surround him or her and understanding which will promote socio-economic development. Employees reside in communities, sometimes poor communities and should not be treated separately from the rest of the community members."*

Discussion

Based on the collective insights of the research participants, it is evident that the EAP practitioners who partook in this study firmly believe that EAPs either do or have the potential to actively contribute to the socio-economic needs of both the people they serve as well as the national policies that guide us as a nation. More prevalent is the view that current EAP services, such as clinical and preventative services are already dealing with socio-economic factors.

Sub-theme 6.4: The micro and macro divide

Patel (2013:692) articulates that an imperative component of the DSW was bridging the dichotomy between micro social work interventions and macro interventions. In her view, this policy recognised the importance of economic intervention at both the micro and macro levels. The researcher set out to understand if EAP practitioners agreed with Patel's views in feeling that bridging the gap between the micro-macro divide is being practiced. The below extracts provide further insight into practitioners' views and experiences.

- *Participant A: "I think I was faced with this dilemma 15-16 years ago... Now I see EAP as doing social work within the workplace and empowering people. I think it is even more effective than community social work because when you look at the level of devastation and dependencies and number of people who are not working, you struggle to get people to get to that level of empowerment. We need social workers to help with DSW at community level, but there was also a gap at the time that could take people to the next level from an economic perspective. Some of those people just lacked skills. So with us helping in the workplace, we in essence are helping taking a community and themselves to the next level."*

- *Participant B shares: “I think services that EAP offer are very relevant to the man on the street. So if you’re looking at the man on the street and if you look at financial issues and big issues like financial counselling for example, most EAPS offer advice and debt counselling which the man on the street doesn’t necessarily know about and would probably benefit from it a great deal should they have access it.”*
- *Participant E: “So looking at the individual, the community and the broader society, yes definitely it could be. If you look at a company of 30 000 people for example that has an EAP service, it is not only available to them but their families as well, so you’re looking at 30 000 plus.”*
- *Participant F offers a suggestion as opposed to a direct answer and states the following: “The EAP should start focusing more on company-based programmes. These types of programmes focus on employees as a whole as opposed to one-on-one sessions. Preventative services fall into this category.”*
- *Participant G: “Enhancement and empowerment is promoted by allowing an individual to identify his or her capabilities and strengths. A social worker cannot work for an individual but works with an individual. It is a joint venture. Furthermore, community resources play a major role in the macro practice. Referrals are made to the experts for the betterment or functioning of an individual.”*

Conversely, one of the research participants states a very interesting and socio-political view as follows:

- *Participant B: “In South Africa, social status plays an important role in one’s wellbeing, particularly to those who were marginalised. As a result, some people are not even aware of the services available to assist them. As a result of this, some who are aware are even sceptical or do not even believe in the social support systems. It often becomes difficult for the members of the family to engage in the EAP services.”*

Discussion of Data

Based on the above exemplars, it remains clear that the majority of EAP practitioners within this study feel that EAPs do assist in bridging the gap between the micro-macro divide. Interestingly, an important reality is mentioned by one of the participants, which urges us to recall and be cognisant of the South African past and the impact it has on modern-day society, by stating that even where EAPs could contribute to the bridging of the micro-macro divide, one may find it challenging at times as potential service beneficiaries linked to the employee who has these free extended family benefits may be untrusting and sceptical of accessing such.

Sub-theme 6.5: Social pluralism and active citizenship

Active citizenship and social pluralism form part of the foundation of the DSW approach. This is underpinned in all elements of the approach as well as the social development approach. When probed to explore whether or not EAP practice could contribute in creating or aiding the development of sound citizenship, the participants shared their views as follows:

- *Participant A: "I think to some extent. If you look at the workplace, especially when you look at the preventative part, when you start mobilising your workforce in terms of taking care of themselves etc., when we do things like peer educators, wellness champions, those are ordinary people that actually volunteer. If you look at many companies that we service, those volunteers take things back to their communities."*
- *Participant B: "From a services perspective, whilst everybody, whether it's a blue collar or white collar environment, the actual services that you have access to is exactly the same. The type of service or the way in which it is presented to you however is different. And that is based on needs levels based on awareness."*
- *Participant C: "In my opinion, EAP is already contributing to social pluralism, diversity is encouraged and affirmed at the workplace, thus respect and tolerance of each other. As an EAP practitioner, we should remain neutral if*

not partial on issues that pose division amongst employees. EAP can contribute to active citizenship by imparting knowledge to employees through education and awareness programmes at the workplace which in return will empower employees to take that back to communities. Empowering one person is like empowering the community.”

- *Participant E: “EAP programmes must take the individuality of employees into account when rendering services to employees. This includes culture, religion, disabilities etc. Active citizenship is achieved by respecting these individual qualities; if the individual feels valued he or she will by default be a more active participant in the company.”*
- *Participant F: “Yes it could.”*
- *Participant G: “Yes. Collaborative stakeholders for example bringing on board private sectors, NGOs, faith-based organisations, other government departments, legal companies, financial institutions etc. is a great example of this.”*

Discussion of Data

Based on the data collected, it is evident that a collective agreement exists, with all participants irrefutably agreeing that EAPs do in fact contribute to and actively encourage social pluralism and active citizen participation outside the confines of the world of work.

Theme 7: DSW as an informer for EAP strategies

Against the backdrop of having explored the five key themes set out in the DSW, the researcher wished to ascertain whether the research participants in their capacities as EAP practitioners felt that the DSW approach could benefit the development of EAP strategies. The following views were shared:

- *Participant A offers an interesting view in stating that a strong link already exists. This view is substantiated as follows: “I don’t think it is anything new. I*

think that based on the fact that most people practicing EAP are social workers, they brought this into practice. If you just go through the EAPA-SA code of ethics and the standards, it is all based on that. There is definitely an influence.”

- *Participant B shares: “Absolutely, I think it is a whole new field where you would be encouraging one another like the example of medical aids.”*
- *Participant C unequivocally shares: “Yes, social welfare and EAP are working towards the same goal. Improvement in the social welfare system will have positive impact on EAP.”*
- *Participant E: “I think so. Usually if we look at the strategies, it’s obviously really directed to your company or your organisation and the impact and the difference it’s going to make to your employees.”*
- *Participant F simply stated: “Yes it could.”*
- *Lastly, Participant G confirms the above views in stating: “Yes, since it is a holistic approach.”*

Discussion of Data

There was a firm accord that the DSW approach could and does influence the development of EAP strategies.

Whilst it is safe to say that EAP strategies are, for the most part, developed around organisational needs, data sets and trend analysis, utilisation statistics and costing models, the practitioners who partook in the research study all felt that social policy, more specifically the DSW, could and more than likely does influence the development of strategy.

Theme 8: Are the key DSW themes represented within EAP practice?

Towards the latter part of the researcher’s interview, the focus area shifted from the DSW framework to actual practice. The fundamental motivation behind this part of

the interview was to unpack whether or not the approach had consciously or unconsciously influenced EAP practitioners in reality.

- *Participants A, B and D all opted to not answer this particular question, citing uncertainty.*
- *Participant C acknowledged that certain themes were included and others not. “Social and economic development is included based on strength of the individual to contribute effectively to the economy. Bridging the gap between micro and macro practice is accessible to all and the aspect of contributing to social pluralism means that we are accountable to our workplaces and communities, so yes.”*
- *Participant F states: “Yes. Maybe not on an optimal level, but on a small scale some of the services rendered by the EAP are on par with developmental social welfare.”*

Holding an opposing view, the minority indicated that there is not practical influence.

- *Participant E stated: “I haven’t looked at the EAP/EWP in that way. Like I said, you’re always trying to make your employees more productive but...we haven’t seen the greater impact in society and how it plays a role, so I think this was a great eye-opener.”*
- *Participant G simply stated: “Not quite.”*

Discussion of Data

An abundance of literature is available by authors including Lombard (2007), Patel (2005) and Gray (2006), amongst others which speaks to the practical implications of the DSW approach within the social work field. No research has been conducted regarding the link between EAPs and the approach, which creates a fundamental opportunity for debate given the common goals and purpose served despite differing working environments. The researcher set out to understand whether or not any of

the key themes of the DSW approach are represented in their practice. Unlike prior sections, the views on this particular component were split.

Theme 9: DSW benefits for EAP practice

As the researcher moved towards the end of the interview, it became increasingly important to understand whether the EAP practitioners who partook in this study had seen, felt or experienced any value-added benefits for the EAP industry as a whole by applying (present or future) the principles of the DSW approach in order to determine solid conclusions for the study as a whole.

- *Participant A: “We as RSA should not create or breed dependence which is why I like EAP. From an EAP standards perspective and social work ethics perspective it’s all there. It’s just clumped in a different way. The fundamental principles of our profession are there, all five themes. I think if you’re wanting to push a developmental approach, what it would do is highlight certain standards a lot more... It can be difficult but we’re getting there.”*
- *Participant B remarked: “Absolutely.”*
- *Participant C: “The success of social welfare depends on the combined efforts of all bodies. For consistency, the application of the developmental social welfare approach will benefit the EAP practice.”*
- *Participant F: “EAP services are based on assisting the employee to in turn increase the performance of the company. If EAPs focus on developing employees (as indicated by developmental social welfare) the employees will be that much stronger and motivated to perform their duties to the best of their abilities. This in turn will greatly increase the ‘health’ of the company.”*
- *Participant G: “By harmonising economic and social programmes and policies, opening up to inter-sectorial collaboration, by promoting human dignity as this approach allows our users to become self-sufficient.”*

Discussion of Data

An overwhelming majority of participants agreed that the DSW approach could benefit EAP strategies. One participant in particular alluded to the fact that the benefits are already there and have been formally set out and entrenched by EAPA-SA. The other participants linked benefits to an assortment of components including the combined efforts of all stakeholders in achieving the broader social strategies of the nation. Other participants focused on citizen/community empowerment as well as finding harmony within economic and social development aspects.

Theme 10: EAPs and social welfare policies and approaches

The concluding section of the interview aimed to unpack the EAP practitioners' overall perceptions regarding social welfare policy as opposed to a particular framework. The researcher hoped to understand what EAP practitioners' views are regarding relationships, linkages or tendencies. The below are exact participant extracts which demonstrate a general sense of discomfort and objection.

- *Participant A: "I don't think EAPs should be involved in social policy. This is my business view. If we continue to talk social policy, the business can't see value. I think we should be more aligned to labour policies because they still advocate for labour, for equality between employee and employer. It is not swayed towards the victim mind-set which is in social welfare policy."*
- *Participant B: "No, I think it is a very specific programme. Like my answers for the previous questions, I think it is a very specific, I think it's more private, corporate sector, once you're governed by like your social welfare or the DSW you are almost governed by government institutes (and we all know processes there are very difficult and different), whereas here you run your business the way that you want to, you stick to your quality."*
- *Participant C: "I believe in the intentions and objectives of social welfare policies and approach. The focus is more on populations which is different to the EAP approach, which is more linked to enhancing individuals and their families' wellbeing, which in return contribute to the communities. At times the policies might delay or hinder the EAP implementation progress, and the two might seem to be working parallel to each other."*

Offering differing views to the majority, participants F and G state in agreement:

- *Participant F: “I am of the opinion that EAPs should be guided by the developmental social welfare. If employees are assisted ‘developmentally’, it adds value to those individuals. As a rule, the company has an obligation to invest in its employees and in turn the employees must work to further the company. It’s a mutual responsibility. If EAPs function from a developmental social welfare approach, this concept becomes a reality. Employees are valued and respected, seen as individuals with potential; these are the things that all human beings need to thrive.”*
- *Participant G: “Yes, I truly believe that the developmental social welfare approach is good and applicable to EAP. EAP is part and parcel of social work methods. It should not be treated in silo.”*

Discussion of Data

The last section of the study yielded two distinct and differing views. The one faction demonstrated a common view that EAPs should not be guided by social welfare principles or approaches. In summary, the holistic view held is that whilst the underlying objectives and intentions remain remarkably similar and may yield holistically-positive social results, the two entities practice and service two separate populations: the employed vs the unemployed.

On the opposing front, this faction of participants held the view that the DSW approach is a good guideline upon which EAP policies can be formed in order to further assist with the achievement of the broader national social welfare goals.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the data collected by means of a semi-structured interview was presented. Through a rigorous process of data analysis, the researcher established a broad view of the participants' perceptions and experiences as EAP practitioners in relation to the DSW approach.

The following and concluding chapter will revisit the goal and objectives of the study and then reflect and share the findings. The researcher wishes to draw conclusions based on the data set and provide suggested recommendations.

Chapter 4

Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Introduction

According to the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997), all South African citizens are requested to actively and freely participate in the development of an equitable, democratic and person-centred social welfare system. The intended end goal is a peaceful, caring and humane society which will sustain and endorse the rights and needs of its people. Furthermore, such a society would meet basic human right's needs, act as a catalyst for releasing people's creative benefits, build human capital and resource capacities in such a manner that promotes self-reliance on a social, economic and political level, whilst allowing South Africans the opportunity to promote and develop their wellbeing and that of others. The White Paper further set out to explain that the foundations which had been laid were centred on social development and had adopted the developmental social welfare (DSW) approach. It is against this landscape that this paper was shouldered.

Patel (2015:5) educes retrospectively that the proposed shift from a typical and historical social treatment approach to a social development approach did not occur in the South African landscape. Lombard (2008:158) states, "Neither source provided a clear definition of the meaning of the construct 'developmental social welfare' within their specific contexts. This gave rise to years of debate and a diversity of interpretations of the attributes that should be allocated to the construct". In a later study undertaken by Patel and Hochfeld (2013:696), they confirm that a variety of challenges and misinterpretations of the shift had been identified over time which included, for example, the need for clearer understanding of what the approach entailed conceptually, what the practical implications would be, and the lack of clear direction as to how the DSW approach was meant to be implemented. This is arguably still the case. While DSW is firmly established in national welfare policy and broadly endorsed by the social work fraternity, a significant knowledge

gap exists surrounding the theory and practice of the approach, which has hampered its translation into practice (Patel & Hochfeld, 2013:696).

Comparative analysis of developmental social work in different cultural, social, economic and political contexts could also aid theory building and inform practice. Learning from practice by documenting local innovation are other ways of strengthening the approach. Critical reflection is needed of what works and what does not, and why, as well as what the efficacy of the approach is vis-à-vis other approaches to social work. Finally, a prerequisite of the emerging developmental social work paradigm is not only a rigorous knowledge base, but also requires social and institutional support for the values that inform the approach, as well as a set of clearly-defined issues, interests, practices and institutional arrangements that characterise it (Patel & Hochfeld, 2013:700). Patel (2005:5) states, "A range of factors pertaining to policy implementation have had a negative impact on welfare-service delivery and the scaling-up effects of the developmental approach to social welfare and social work".

In her article, "Social Workers Shaping Welfare Policy in South Africa: The White Paper for Social Welfare and Lessons for Policy Practice", Patel (2014) shared lessons learnt by South Africa during and post implementation of the approach. She shared, "Crossing disciplinary boundaries for social workers in the real world of policy making and practice does not come easily and bringing about change on the scale required to give effect to the White Paper required large-scale change and management interventions across the government, NPOs, professional organizations, and training institutions". This was not implemented and much resistance to the new direction in social welfare was encountered. She concluded her article in stating, "A major challenge for the future is to grow and strengthen the developmental approach to social welfare conceptually and to continue growing innovation- and evidence-based social development practice".

Against this topography, the goal of this study was to explore the perceptions of EAP practitioners regarding the DSW approach in Gauteng Province. The primary objectives were delineated into the below-mentioned points:

- To contextualise concepts such as EAPs in relation to the DSW approach, which deals with numerous aspects and services of social welfare in a South African context,
- Explore and describe EAP practitioners' perceptions and views of the DSW approach,
- Explore and understand whether or not the DSW themes could influence EAPs in practice. Specific themes to be explored include: enhancing preventative services, adaptation of clinical EAP services to lean towards a developmental approach, social and economic development of EAP users, and ways in which EAPs can contribute towards bridging the gap between micro and macro practice, and
- To make recommendations based on research findings in order to enhance EAP practice in South Africa.

4.2 Structural guide of study

In this chapter, the researcher wishes to summarise the findings of the study in relation to the original research question, goals and objectives. The researcher will also provide recommendations based on the findings of the study. It is important to recall the methodology employed before unpacking the findings.

Chapter One provided a broad positioning of the study. In this section, the researcher unpacked the rationale, approach and objectives of the study.

Chapter Two explored the theoretical underpinnings and past research linked to the DSW model.

Chapter Three unpacked the empirical findings of the study as received and transcribed by the research participants.

Chapter Four reviews the study as a whole by providing a précis of the study as well as conclusions and recommendations for consideration.

4.3 Research findings and conclusions

Objective 1: To contextualise concepts such as EAPs in relation to the DSW approach, which deals with numerous aspects and services of social welfare in a South African context.

During this study, the researcher was unable to attain explicit correlations between EAPs and the DSW approach from an academic and theoretical point of view.

It was established that there are a number of definite links existing in terms of practice methodologies and broader objectives, including the fundamental premises of the DSW approach and the core purpose of the EAP profession.

The Employee Assistance Programme Association of South Africa (EAPA-SA) has formulated a code of ethics and standards document that provides a striking similitude to the core objectives and strategies contained within the DSW approach which is carried through within the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997).

The general sense acquired is that the DSW approach was designed and has been translated specifically in relation to social development and social welfare with social workers being the catalyst. This appears to explicitly exclude social services rendered by EAP practitioners, seemingly due to the lack of professional acknowledgment of the profession as a social welfare agent due to the core environment in which EAPs operate.

A lack of insight into the DSW approach demonstrates a possible lack of synergy, influence and knowledge between socio-political policy and corporate interest within this population.

Perhaps a more critical finding is the theoretical evidence, which appears in historical views of those whom social welfare services are directed at. It appears, at this juncture, that South African citizens who are formally employed are not considered

vulnerable due to their employment status. This generalisation should be reviewed given the socio-political and economic position of South Africa in the present day.

The bulk of the acquired literature appeared to completely segment roles and stakeholders within differing professions. Objective one has therefore revealed that there are fundamental principles which guide various functions and tasks, such as EAP practitioners and social workers or NGOs and occupational social workers, but collectively they carry within them a golden thread of similarity. This suggests that a potential gap in possible partnership formation, which may lead to powerful results in terms of achieving the national goals set out, is being ignored.

Objective 2: Explore and describe EAP practitioners' perceptions and experiences of the DSW approach.

In terms of expressing their own conceptual understanding, the majority of participants indicated that they had no explicit knowledge of the DSW approach; however, based on the title they were able to piece together a view of the approach.

Even the most seasoned EAP practitioners appeared nervous and reluctant in discussing their views and perceptions of the DSW approach.

Those EAP practitioners who possess social work experience and background were able to describe the approach and how it should, in theory, impact all social welfare practice models, but also acknowledged that this is not always implemented as such.

During the data collection process, it became evident that whilst EAPA-SA specifies industry requirements to become a practitioner, it does not dictate a singular academic background together with the fact that EAPs have not been formally acknowledged as a profession. This dynamic has created an uneven platform and further created confusion in terms of the 'agents' who are working in alignment to achieve broader national goals.

Objective 3: Explore and understand whether or not the DSW themes could influence EAPs in practice.

Specific themes explored included: enhancing preventative services, adaptation of clinical EAP services to lean towards a developmental approach, social and economic development of EAP users, and ways in which EAPs can contribute towards bridging the gap between micro and macro practice.

The general consensus within this study indicates that the vast majority of practitioners hold the view that there is a definite commonality between EAP practice and the underlying themes within the DSW.

The overall viewpoint from the onset sets forth the notion that EAPs, much like the DSW approach, seek to positively impact and improve the lives of their beneficiaries.

A distinct differentiation between the two concepts became evident, with the majority of practitioners pointing out that whilst there are similarities, the core beneficiary and core operating environment lends itself to the utilisation of differing methodologies of action even though a shared objective exists.

There is a definite link between academic background and working experience in terms of the knowledge, attitude and perceptions of practitioners.

An overwhelming majority believe that the preventative element of the DSW is a key component of EAP practice which speaks directly to the effectiveness of any programme in the corporate world.

The majority of participants within this study appear however to hold consensus to the fact that EAP services are indeed developmental in nature. The consensus appears to concentrate specifically on the fact that employees are exposed to services which, whether intentionally done or not, support the development of clinical (and preventative) approaches within the EAP structures.

EAPs can contribute to the socio-economic development of South Africa and its citizens.

There was firm accord that, if applied, the DSW approach could influence the development of EAP strategies to align the outcomes with those of the country's national goals.

Most frequently appearing from the participant extracts were the notions that employing developmental clinical services in practice is imperative, if not already an automatically assumed stance.

This study has indicated that EAPs are active contributors to the goals of social pluralism as well as socio-economic development, as utilising EAP services produces an empowering snowball effect on the individual as well as the family and community systems of those accessing the service.

By implication, the above therefore lends itself to a supposition that EAPs, in many aspects, in fact contribute to easing the burden on an already-strained social welfare system from both a resource and financial point of view.

Objective 4: To make recommendations based on research findings in order to enhance EAP practice in South Africa.

Upon undertaking this study, the researcher aimed to explore and understand the perceptions of EAP practitioners regarding the DSW approach. Based on the empirical findings, the researcher would like to set forth the following recommendations:

It is, therefore, a recommendation is that there is a greater need within the social welfare domain to develop a comprehensive action and training plan which will assist all social welfare workers in understanding how best to contribute to the implementation and achievement of the DSW and the national goals it entails.

In addition and to a large extent, the findings herein point to the existence of an unofficial golden thread of similarities in terms of objectives between DSW and EAP. The researcher is of the view that EAPs need to actively demonstrate their contribution towards achieving the objectives within the DSW.

Lastly, the researcher firmly avers that EAPA-SA, being representative of a body of professional social welfare practitioners, needs to urgently canvas for the formalisation and professionalisation of the EAP industry in order to allow for much-needed alignment, as well as to solidify future partnerships between e.g. government, civil society and the private sector.

4.4 Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings within this research study, the following recommendations can be made:

4.4.1 Department of Social Welfare and Social Welfare practitioner recommendations

There is evidence that suggests a need for training or perhaps refresher training to be conducted which looks specifically at the fundamental components and stakeholders responsible for the ongoing implementation of the DSW approach, as contained in the White Paper for Social Welfare.

All stakeholders involved in the delivery of social welfare services, irrespective of qualification, place of work, environment and location must be provided with a voice or platform of sorts to enable the achievement of our national goals.

Current and updated research on living standards of the average employed South African should also be conducted, the findings of which should be readily available in order to ascertain if the current definitions of underprivileged, poor and vulnerable are on par with citizen realities. This type of revision may call for the realignment of assumptions and generalised thinking that an employed citizen (EAP client) is a stable and well-rounded citizen.

4.4.2 Employee Assistance recommendations

A further investigation into the progress made with regard to the implementation of the paper, 20 years on would also yield much-needed insight into the successes, gaps and needs of the approach.

Along with EAP service providers and practitioners, irrespective of academic background, EAPA-SA as a professional body should begin to canvas for the formalisation of the profession so as to better equip social workers, occupational social workers and psychologists or registered counsellors working in the EAP field to formally align themselves with the national goals.

Given the limited amount of literature found linking EAPs to social welfare, social policy and the national goals as a whole, it is imperative to encourage further research in this regard. As the world of work places a larger emphasis on EAPs, so do the users and their dependants.

4.4.3 General recommendations

A general call for innovative thinking and sharing platforms should be implemented across all sectors of society that are driven solely for the purpose of relationship building backed by research and scientific supporting evidence. Without a fuller scientific view of how best social welfare, EAPs, civil society and government can partner for the benefit of the people, more and more leveraging opportunities will be missed.

4.5 Concluding remarks

This study set out to understand the perceptions of EAP practitioners regarding the DSW approach in Gauteng. The underlying purpose of this study therefore was to unpack and understand EAP practitioners' views and perceptions of the approach and to ascertain if any linkages, gaps and opportunities towards this common goal exists.

The study has yielded results indicative of a broader lack of understanding amongst EAP practitioners of social welfare policy, with specific reference to the DSW approach which underpins the White Paper for Social Development (1997). With this in mind, this paper simultaneously demonstrated that with regard to specific components of the DSW, EAP practitioners are able to identify distinct links, potential areas of collaboration and synergy between EAP practice and DSW. It has therefore

been concluded that with a firm commitment, further scientific research and cross collaboration of professions and entities, social welfare enhancements can be redesigned and repositioned in an innovative and collaborative manner for all.

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List of Annexures

Annexure 1: Letter of ethical clearance

Annexure 2: Interview Schedule

Annexure 3: Informed Consent

Annexure 4: Authorisation by EAPA-SA Board

Annexure 5: Data Storage Form

Annexure 6: Letter from Editor